

# *Faith*

## *Al-Iman*

*Its Pillars, True Meaning & Nullification*

*by*

*Dr Muhammad Na'im Yassin*

*Translated by*

*Sheikh Muhammad Gemea'ah*

*Dr Ahlam Fathy*

*Dr Amany Abu Fadi*

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In the name of Allah Most Gracious. Most Merciful

## Introduction

All praise be to Allah. Him alone do we thank and look to for help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Him against our evils deeds and misgivings. Whoever is guided by Allah will never be led astray, and whoever strays from Allah will have no guide. We bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his household and his companions.

The source of corruption is in the avoidance of what is right and the source of goodness is the pursuit of what is right. Righteousness is the condition under which Allah created all things, then instructed them to exist therein. Allah alone created all creatures without assistance. He dispenses the lives of His creatures to certain conditions and controls their affairs in His own way. Allah is infallible; everything He creates and brings about is right. Anyone who strays from His divine bidding will meet with ruin. Allah created the earth and the heavens and in His wisdom sustains them; therefore they move in a state of harmony. <<***Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) gods besides Allah, then verily both would have been ruined.***>> (21:22)

Man is one of the creatures of Allah the Most Exalted. Actuating the good in one's life is dependent upon knowing and following what is right, while destruction is the natural outcome of ignoring or neglecting it. Hence, Allah being 'the Truth' (*al-Haqq*)<sup>1</sup> and all

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<sup>1</sup> One of the ninety-nine names of Allah.



truth emanating from Him, the ruin of human life is a result of disbelief in Allah and the truth that comes from Him. Belief in Allah and whatever comes from Him and obeying His injunctions leads to goodness in man's life. <<*Then if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My Guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery. But whosoever turns away from My Reminder (i.e. neither believes in this Qur'an nor acts upon its orders, etc.) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.*>> (20:123-124)

Allah will only guide those who believe in Him, remember Him, and feel His presence and glory in their hearts. Conversely, Allah will never guide those who deviate from His way. Consequently, it is man's choice either to believe and find happiness in both lives (this life and the hereafter) or disbelieve and be miserable in both.

For this reason, learning and teaching the facts of *iman* (faith) and *kufr* (infidelity) and what may lead to it constitutes the best approach man can adopt in life. If man is aware of these two concepts, he will have the ability to acknowledge and achieve happiness and, in the same token, be able to identify the causes of misery and thus avoid them.

I hope to clarify, with the knowledge Allah has bestowed in me, the facts concerning *iman* and its pillars and the facts concerning *kufr*, its manifestations, and the ways in which it permeates the heart. If my words are accurate, then they have come from Allah the True, but if otherwise, then it is the result of my own imperfection and I pray Allah forgives me and directs me to any of His believing servants to correct me.

I have divided this book into two parts.

Part One: *The Pillars of Iman and its True Meaning*

Part Two: *The Reasons for Kufr and its Manifestations*

## Part One

### The Pillars of *Iman*

*<<The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers. They say, We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers—and they say, We hear and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all).>> (2:285)*

*<<O you who believe! Believe in Allah, and His Messenger (Muhammad), and the Book (Qur'an) which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He has sent down to those before (him), and whosoever disbelieves in Allah and His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away.>> (4:136)*

*<<It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness, and each and every act of obedience to Allah, etc.) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-Birr is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of his love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to the poor who beg, and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask...>> (2:177)*

In the Hadith narrated by Muslim on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace be unto him) said, when Angel Gabriel asked him about the meaning of *iman* (faith):

You should believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Prophets, the Day of Judgment, and that you should believe in the Divine Decree of good and evil.<sup>1</sup>

These six bases are the pillars of *Iman* as revealed through the Messengers (may peace be upon them) and through the Books. No person's faith is complete until he believes in all of them in the way indicated in Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Whoever denies any of these pillars is considered an unbeliever.

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.1.

## **The Belief in Allah, the Almighty, the Most Glorified**

To believe in Allah is to believe that He is the Lord, Creator, and Master of everything, and that He alone is worthy of all forms of worship. e.g. prayer, fasting, supplications, fear, and submission. It also means the belief that He alone is entitled to attributes of perfection and is beyond all manifestations of imperfection.

Belief in Allah requires recognition of the Oneness of His lordship, godhead, and names and attributes<sup>1</sup>. 'Oneness' means being unique in these three concepts. No one is a true believer until he adheres firmly to the belief that Allah is the Lord of everything and there is no god but He. Allah alone is worthy of worship. He is perfect in His attributes and names, and no other being is truly perfect except Him. These are the three types of monotheism that are part of the belief in Allah.

### **The First Aspect: Oneness of Lordship**

This aspect generally shows that Allah is the only Lord of everything. Lexically speaking, a lord is an owner and sustainer. Allah's lordship means He is the only Creator, Ruler, and Sustainer of people's lives. Thus admitting the Oneness of Allah's lordship is simply admitting that He is the Creator, the Owner, the Life-Giver and Taker, the Propitious, the Harm-apprehender, the Hearer of requests, the Capable over all, the Bestower, and the Withholder to Whom all creations belong and to Whom they return. <<*Surely,*

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<sup>1</sup> The noble names and/or attributes refer to the ninety-nine names and attributes of Allah. Ed.

***His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (man, jinn, and all that exists)!>> (7:54)***

This type of monotheism includes Divine Decrees and everything that happens through the knowledge, will, and power of Allah. In other words, Allah is the absolute sustainer of the universe: He creates, maintains, changes, moves, augments, withholds, and gives, and takes back lives. No one else shares this task with Him.

This type of monotheism is elucidated in the Qur'an, and there is hardly a *surah* (chapter) that does not contain examples of this aspect. It is more a cornerstone for the other aspects because the Creator, the Owner, and the Sustainer alone is worthy of worship, submission, gratitude, remembrance, supplication, fear, etc.

Likewise, the Creator, the Owner, and the Sustainer alone is worthy of all attributes of beauty, glory, and perfection because such attributes can only belong to the Lord of the worlds. Creation and sovereignty cannot belong to one who is incapable of doing whatever he wants or wills.

This aspect of monotheism also occurs in the Qur'an in the context of praise, worship, and submission to Allah, and also in the context of exposing His glorious attributes and noble names.

In the context of praise, a Muslim recites in every *rak'ah* of prayer: <<***All praises be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (man, jinn, and all that exists).***>> (1:2) <<***So praise be to Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth, the Lord of all the worlds.***>> (45:36)

In the context of submission to Him: <<*Say: Verily, Allah's Guidance is the only guidance, and we have been commanded to submit (ourselves) to the will of the Lord of the 'Alamin (man, jinn, and all that exists).*>> (6:71)

In the context of sincerity to Allah: <<*Say: Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (man, jinn, and all that exists).*>> (6:162)

In the context of seeking protection: << *Say: Shall I take as a Wali (lord, protector, object of worship) any other than Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? And He Who feeds but is not fed. Say: Verily, I am commanded to be the first of those who submit themselves to Allah (as Muslims). And be not of the mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah).*>> (6:14)

In the context of supplication: << *Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (man, jinn, and all that exists)! Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors.*>> (7:54-55)

In the context of worship: <<*And why should I not worship Him (Allah alone) Who has created me, and to Whom you shall be returned*>> (36:22), and: <<*(O mankind! Worship your Lord, Who created you and those before you that you may be pious. Who made the earth a resting place for you, and the heavens as a canopy, and sent down rain from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you.*>> (2:21-22) Thus the Creator of the heavens and earth is alone worthy of being taken as God and protector to Whom His servants submit themselves in worship and supplication.

Again the Qur'an combines the lordship of Allah in His kingdom (that of the earth and the heavens) and His other most noble names. The *Ayat al-Kursi* (the Verse of the Throne): **<<Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever-living, and the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber, nor sleep overtake Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Who is he that can intercede except by His permission. He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Sovereignty and Knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.>>** (2:255) The Creator of the earth and heavens is alone the Eternally Living, the Self-existing, the Omniscient, the Preserver, the High, and the Almighty. Contemplate these words of the Qur'an: **<<And indeed We have created man, and We know what his own self whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.>>** (50:16), and: **<<Should not He Who has created know? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous (to His slaves) the All-Aware (of everything).>>** (67:14) There is no doubt that the Creator of all creatures is the Observer and the Aware (of what they do).

It is useless indeed to believe in the lordship of Allah without admitting the Oneness of His names and attributes. Sometimes people deny such names or render them in a distorted manner. These people (wittingly or unwittingly) commit apostasy. Allah said that polytheists believed that He was the only Creator, yet they did not admit the Oneness of godhead and they associated others with Him in worship. They also denied some of His names. Allah



said about them: <<*And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners (unto Him).*>> (12:106) One scholar, Mujahid, explained this *ayah* (verse):

Their belief in this *ayah* is confined to the fact that He created, fed, and took away their souls, but they still worshipped others besides Allah.<sup>1</sup>

Another group of *Salaf* (early Muslims) said:

If you ask them who created the skies and the earth, they will say Allah, while they believe in someone else.<sup>2</sup>

This fact was stressed in the Qur'an: <<*And those whom they invoke instead of Him, have no power of intercession,—except those who bear witness to the truth and they know.*>> (43:86) and: <<*Say: Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight, and who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs? They will say, Allah. Say: Will you not then be afraid of Allah's Punishment (for setting up rivals with Allah)?*>> (10:31) Thus it is clear that those who admit the lordship of Allah do not necessarily admit His Oneness of godhead and names, and thus fall into the category of *kufr*.

## **The Second Aspect of Monotheism: Oneness of Godhead**

This aspect denotes the belief that only Allah is one, the True God and worship is for Him alone. Lexically speaking, worship means adoration, reverent love, ardent devotion, and visible humility;

<sup>1</sup> At-Tabary. *Commentary on Qur'an*, vol.16, p 287.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol.16, pp.286-288.

other scholars define it as the utmost degree of love and submission.

The Oneness of godhead requires the sincere worship of Allah alone with no others beside Him, either secretly or publicly. The true believer worships Allah and is sincere in love, fear, supplication, trust, humility, and submission.

This aspect of monotheism implies the acceptance of the other two, with the inverse being fallacious. If one admits the Oneness of lordship, it does not mean that he admits the Oneness of godhead, as he may not be a worshipper of Allah. The Oneness of names and attributes does not include the other types. However, when a man admits the Oneness of godhead and acknowledges Allah to be alone worthy of worship, he simply admits Allah is the Lord of the worlds and that He possesses all the attributes of perfection. Sincerity in worship can only be for the Perfect Lord.

This is the reason why this aspect is considered the most important issue of Islam for which all creation was created. <<***And I (Allah) created not jinns and men except that they should worship Me (Alone).***>> (51:56)

Ibn Taymiyah said:

This type is the clear distinction between the monotheists and the polytheists. According to it, one gets rewarded or punished. He who does not adhere is considered a polytheist.<sup>1</sup>

For this type of monotheism, messengers were sent and books were revealed. Every messenger came with a message based on it.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *The Message of Good and Evil*, p 261.

*<<And verily, We have sent among every nation a messenger (proclaiming): Worship Allah (alone), and avoid false deities, etc.>> (16:36) <<And We did not sent any Messenger before you but We inspired him (saying): None has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me.>> (21:25) Allah informed us that His messengers Noah, Hud, Salih, and Shu'aib all came to convey the same message to their peoples: <<And We sent to them a Messenger from themselves: Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. Will you not then be afraid (of Him i.e. of His Punishment because of worshipping others beside him)?>> (23:32) Allah informed us as well that Abraham said to his people: <<Verily, I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth, and I am not of those who worship others besides Allah.>> (6:79)*

Hence this aspect of monotheism is the real essence of Islam. The two testimonies<sup>1</sup> confirming it became the first basic pillar of Islam. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

Verily, Islam is founded on five pillars: testifying there is no god but Allah, performance of prayer, payment of *zakat* (charity), fasting the month of *Ramadan*, and pilgrimage to the *Ka'aba* (House of Allah)<sup>2</sup>

The idea of the Oneness of godhead requires that we direct all forms of worship to Him alone, and to observe such worship with the utmost degree of sincerity. This demands the following:

1. Allah should be loved sincerely, i.e. one should not develop a stronger love in his heart for anyone equal to or more than Allah.

<sup>1</sup> There is no god but Allah (the One), and Muhammad (peace be unto him) is His prophet. Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.21.

If one does so, he becomes a polytheist. <<*And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah (more than anything else).*>> (2:165) It is an act of *shirk* (polytheism) for someone to love anyone or anything with same intensity as one is supposed to love Allah. Allah never forgives such an act until one sincerely repents.

It is human nature that man loves himself, his parents, his sons, his country, and his wealth. Sincerity in loving God does not indicate suppressing this natural inclination, but indicates that man's love for such worldly values should come after his love for God. Love of God must transcend all other sentiments; in cases where conflicting sentiments prevail, the worldly values should be sacrificed for religious ones. The Qur'an states in this sense: <<*Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, wealth you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision. And Allah guides not the people who are disobedient to Allah.*>> (9:24)

2. Supplication should be for Him only, and so should trust and hope, especially as all matters are only in His power <<*And invoke not besides Allah, any that will neither profit you, nor hurt you, but if (in case) you did so, you will certainly be one of the evildoers.*>> (10:106) <<*And put your trust in Allah if you are believers indeed.*>> (5:23) <<*Verily, those who have believed, and those who emigrated (for Allah's Religion) and have striven hard in the Way of Allah, all these hope for*

***Allah's Mercy. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.>>***  
(2:218)

3. Allah alone deserves to be feared. If one thinks anything else other than Allah has the power of harming and consequently fears it, it is then considered an act of *shirk* (polytheism): <<***Will you then fear any other than Allah?>>*** (16:52) <<***And if Allah touches you with hurt, then there is none who can remove it but He, and if He intends any good for you, there is no one who can repel His Favour which He causes to reach whomsoever of His slaves He wills. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.>>*** (10:107)
4. All forms of worship must be directed to Allah alone: i.e. ritual duties like praying, bowing, prostrating, fasting, slaughtering a sacrifice, *tawaf* (circumabulating the *Ka'aba*), or verbal pledges or supplications such as beseeching forgiveness. If one performs such forms of worship, or dedicates any of them to any one or thing other than Allah, it is considered an act of *shirk*: <<***Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases, and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.>>*** (4:48)

### **The Third Aspect: Oneness of Names and Attributes**

The third aspect implies a strong belief that Allah possesses attributes of perfection, and is raised above all attributes of inferiority and imperfection. It should be believed He is unique among His creatures with all the names and attributes by which He describes Himself (in the Qur'an) or His Prophet (peace be unto

him) described Him. These names and attributes, or even some of them, should not be denied, misinterpreted, or distorted. They should not be rendered into concrete form or compared to those of created things.

Such a definition sheds light on the three conditions necessary for this aspect of monotheism. Those who do not respect them are indeed failing to admit the Oneness of the names and attributes of Allah.

First: Elimination of any anthropomorphic or human-like characteristic from the concept of deity. Also raising Allah above any element of imperfection.

Second: Believing in the names and attributes as they are found in Qur'an and *Sunnah* without addition, denial, or distortion.

Third: Excessive curiosity to know the secret nature of these attributes is neither permissible nor possible.

As for the first condition, it is demonstrated in the Qur'an: <<***There is nothing like unto Him.***>> (42:11) and <<***And there is none coequal or comparable unto Him.***>> (112:4) and: <<***So put not forward similitudes for Allah.***>> (16:74)

Al-Qurtuby, in his *Tafseer (Commentary on Qur'an)*, explained the verse: <<***There is nothing like Him.***>>

Allah, the most noble name, is unlike any of His creatures and none of His creatures are like Him in greatness, pride, sovereignty, and nobility demonstrated in His noble names and attributes. Even those attributes appearing to be common between the Creator and the

created are in fact of different abilities beyond human comprehension.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Waasety also commented:

His identity, His names, His acts, His attributes have no parallel, and it is impossible for the Eternal (without beginning) to share an attribute with a mortal creature and vice versa. This is the way adopted by the people of *Sunnah*.<sup>2</sup>

Again Sayid Qutb explained the same verse:

It is a self-evident truth, which is taken for granted, the Creator of all things will not resemble the things He created.<sup>3</sup>

The first condition claims that Allah should be raised above all characteristics that are compared with what He described Himself or His Messengers described Him. Therefore, Oneness in attributes implies a Muslim should raise God above the characteristics of having a wife, a partner, a peer, or a sustainer. Again, God should be raised above imperfect descriptions like those of sleep, exhaustion, fatigue, death, ignorance, oppression, negligence, forgetfulness, slumber, bias, or any other sign of imperfection.

The second condition implies adherence to the names and attributes that were mentioned only in the Qur'an and the books of *Sunnah*. Such a method depends on the inherited *Sunnah* from the rightly guided predecessors (salaf) rather than personal opinions. Allah should not be given any name or attribute except that which He

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qurtuby, *Commentary on Qur'an*, vol.16, p 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p 9.

<sup>3</sup> Sayed Qutb, *In the Shade of Qur'an*, vol.7, p 272.

gave to Himself or His Messenger gave to Him. <<**Say: *Do you know better or does Allah?***>> (2:140)

This statement indicates Allah clearly knows better about Himself, and His Messengers were true, never stating anything except what was revealed to them by God. It then becomes necessary for us to turn to Allah and His Messenger to obtain any knowledge concerning Allah's names and attributes. Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal said:

Allah should not be described in terms other than He described Himself (in the Qur'an) or the way His Messenger described Him. Any description should not deviate from the limits of Qur'an and *Hadith*.

Na'im Hammadi, al-Bukhari's Sheikh stressed:

Whoever compares Allah to one of His creatures, becomes a disbeliever. Whoever denies any of the attributes by which Allah referred to Himself or His Prophet referred to Him becomes a disbeliever. These attributes are real and should not be conceived as metaphors or similes.<sup>1</sup>

This condition requires that everyone should believe in these attributes, which are cited in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and understand them in the light of their evident literary meaning as indicated in the Arabic language. One should not deny or change any of them.

The third condition requires one to believe in these attributes cited in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* without asking about their state of being or nature because knowing the nature of this description needs knowledge about the nature described. God's entity and His

<sup>1</sup> Mala Ali al-Qari, *The Commentary on the Greater Fiqh*, p 15.



attributes are unquestionable matters. This is why early Muslims (*Saḥāb*) when asked how Allah the Most Gracious established and sat on His throne, they answered:

The act of establishing (sitting) is known, but the way it was done is unknown. Believing in it is a must whereas asking about the dynamics is heresy.<sup>1</sup>

If someone asks how God descends upon the earth's surface, he should be answered: 'I do not know.'<sup>2</sup> We do not know the precise manner in which He descends. Acknowledging a certain description demands acknowledging the nature of the described. How can you conceive the manner in which Allah hears, sees, speaks, or sits on His throne when you do not know His divine nature. If you believe Allah is permanent and an unchanging truth, which is unparalleled and perfect, then the way He hears, sees, speaks, descends or sits will also be permanent, unchanging, unparalleled, and perfect.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, there are certain ways this aspect of monotheism can be corrupted, and accordingly, should be avoided by any Muslim:

1. Anthropomorphizing: This occurred in the past when the Christians identified Jesus, the son of Mary, as God; when the Jews identified Ezra as God; and when some doctrines compared Allah's face, hand, and hearing to that of animate creatures.
2. Changing the meaning of Allah's names and attributes: By changing their grammatical inflection and pronunciation or

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<sup>1</sup> *The Balmy Paradise (Ar-Rawda an-Nadeyah)*, p 29.

<sup>2</sup> We do not have the right as Muslims to say, about Allah that which we have no authority, proof, or substantiation in the Books of God or *Sunnah* of His Messenger.

<sup>3</sup> *The Balmy Paradise (Ar-Rawda an-Nadeyah)*, p 34.

interpreting them in a heretical way. An example of this in the interpretation of the verse: << *And to Moses Allah spoke direct.*>> the vowel of the word ‘Allah’ is changed to make it appear an object instead of a subject (in Arabic, the *dummah* is changed to a *fatha*), in order to attribute the act of speaking to Moses and not to Allah.

3. Denial of the divine attributes: Such as denying the characteristic of perfection, denying the duty of worship of Allah, and denying the creation.
4. Trying to give explanations to the ‘how’ of Allah’s attributes.

The trend of the literal understanding of names and attributes was adopted by the *Salaf* (predecessors), among them were the Prophet Mohammed’s Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and their successors. Al-Shawkaany said:

The tendencies of the *Salaf* were limited to proving the attributes in their literal meaning without change, distortion, extraneous interpretation, or anthropomorphizing. When asked about any of the attributes, they merely recited the proof without further discussion. They simply said Allah said such and such and we do not know anything apart from this and we cannot speculate about anything beyond our knowledge, which Allah did not permit us to talk about. In the case the one who asked wanted them to transgress the literal limit of the meaning, they rebuked and forbade him from getting involved in a heresy that contradicted what they learned from the Prophet (peace be unto him), his companions, and their successors. In those venerable days, there was common consent and general agreement on the attitude towards the issue. The *Salaf* were always busy doing things

Allah directed them to do such as believing in Him, praying, alms-giving, fasting, Hajj, struggling in the cause of Allah, charity, learning, guiding people, holding fast to what leads to Paradise and avoiding what leads to Hell, enjoining in what is good and forbidding what is bad, and restraining oppressors as much as they could. This is how the religion was kept pure, and was not corrupted by heresy.<sup>1</sup>

### **Categories of Attributes**

The attributes cited in the Qur'an are of two categories. The first is the attribute of identity and state of being related to Allah, such as the attributes describing Himself, His knowledge, life, Ability, hearing, seeing, face speaking, eternity, sovereignty, glory, pride, sublimation, self-sufficiency, and mercy. Second, attributes of action and activities that are related to Allah's will and capacities, such as establishing a throne, descending to earth, coming, wondering, laughing, being satisfied, loving, hating, being angry or happy, and being wily.

Our duty toward these attributes is to ascribe them to God without denial, change, or anthropomorphizing. One must adhere to what Imam Al-Shafi'e (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

I believe in God and every thing He permitted to be mentioned about Himself, and I believe in the Prophet (peace be unto him) and everything he permitted to be mentioned about Him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ash-Shawkaani, *The Treasures of the Salafi Trend*, p 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Fundamental Questions and Answers*, p 50.

## **The Names of Allah:**

Allah and His Prophet (peace be unto him) informed us about the names in the Qur'an and *Summah*. These names are all derivatives that refer to certain characteristics. For example, *Aleem* (the Most-Knowing) is derived from the noun *elm* (knowledge) and so are the rest of His names, such as *Qadeer* (the Most-Powerful) and *Samee* (the Most-Hearing).

The comprehensive name, which includes all the other names and attributes, is Allah. Scholars disagreed on the origin of the word; some, such as Sybaweih, At-Tabary, and Ibn Al-Qayim, said it was derived from the word *elah* (god) while others suggested that it was not a derivation at all.

It is not a matter of contradiction that Allah's names are nouns and adjectives at the same time. For example, *al-Rahman* (the Gracious) is His name and adjective as well because it stands for what it means. All the names of Allah express and are referred to as 'the Glorious Names' as they describe the best and noble identity of Allah.

This type of monotheism requires a firm belief in each name and whatever it stands for. For instance, we must believe that a name like *al-Raheem* (the Merciful), which is mentioned in the Qur'an, belongs to Allah and implies His being the Merciful who bestows His Mercy on whoever He wants. The same applies to all the other names.

It is established that the number of these names are ninety-nine. It was narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

Verily, there are ninety-nine names for Allah. He who memorizes them will get into Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

Scholars agreed that such a Hadith does not negate the existence of names other than the ninety-nine, and that the ninety-nine names are some but not all. This also indicates that there are other names that Allah kept as a secret for Himself and didn't inform us about. It was narrated that the Apostle of Allah said:

If a Muslim is in trouble or distressed and says: 'O Allah, I am Your servant, son of Your servants, my fate is in Your Hand. You are executing in Your Judgment and fair in Your Decrees. I pray to You in every name You gave to Yourself or revealed in Your Book or taught to any one of Your creatures or kept as a secret in Your hidden knowledge. Make the Qur'an a relief for my heart and a remedy for my distress and anguish.' Allah will comfort him and substitute his sorrow for happiness.

The Companions asked the Prophet (peace be unto him) if the words should be learnt, and he answered:

Yes, any one who hears them must learn them<sup>2</sup>

Memorizing the names, in this context, is not only an indication of knowing, understanding, or grasping (this facet of monotheism), but also using them while supplicating to Allah is an act of belief and respect. In this light, the Hadith implies whoever learns them and contemplates their significance as well as glorifying their holder (Allah), will be deserving of Paradise.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6476

<sup>2</sup> Al-Baihaqi, *Names and Attributes*, p.6-7; and *Sharh al-Aqida at-Tahawiyah*, p 110.

## Proofs for the Oneness of Names and Attributes:

This aspect of monotheism is traceable through a number of evidences to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. One hardly finds a single *surah* (chapter) without mentioning the names and attributes of God. They occur in different contexts: in subjects related to monotheism, worship, legislation, instruction, and storytelling. The two most evident demonstrations of this occur in one particular *surah* (chapter), and a particular *ayah* (verse).

The *surah* is *al-Ikhlās* (The Purity of Faith). It is the most comprehensive *surah* of the Qur'an concerning this aspect of monotheism. It is regarded by the Prophet (peace be unto him) to be the most ennobled *surah* and he mentioned that it equals (in value) one third of the whole Qur'an. << ***Say: He is Allah, the One. Allah the Self-Sufficient Master. He begets not, nor was He begotten; and there is none coequal or comparable unto Him.***>> (112:1 to 4)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that a man heard another reciting *al-Ikhlās* many times. In the morning he went to the Prophet and told him about it. The Prophet said:

By Him Who possesses my soul, this verse is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'an.

It is also narrated on the authority of Abu Said that the Prophet said to his companions:

Is any one of you incapable of reciting a third of the Qur'an in a night?

Upon this he (the Prophet) said:

He is Allah, the One, is equivalent to a third of the Qur'an. (*Sahih Muslim*, no.1769)

The Traditions (*Hadith*) on the merits of *Surah al-Ikhlās* (Purity of Faith) are many. *Zad al-Ma'ad*, vol.1, p 82.

This great *surah* illustrates the perfection of Allah. It negates any sign of imperfection in Him. In it, Allah described Himself as being One, Eternal, Absolute. Who does not beget, is not begotten and that no one is like Him. The *Ahad* (One) means the incomparable, which signifies uniqueness in wholeness. The *Assamad* (Absolute) indicates He is the Lord and Master and the Only One relied upon by all in times of need and trouble. If someone resorts to mortal creatures for their needs, turning their backs on the Creator, this does not nullify the fact of Allah's Lordship. But shunning the Creator and turning to things He created is an act of ignorance and foolishness, for all matters are in Allah's hands. Thus, if the name 'One' negates the full sense of imperfection of Allah, the name 'the Absolute' affirms the full sense of wholeness and splendor to Him.

This explains why the Prophet (peace be unto him) referred to this *surah* as one-third of the Qur'an. It encapsulates the whole Islamic belief affirming perfection to God, as well as negating any sign of imperfection attributed to Him. In general, the Qur'an tends to explain belief so people can know Allah and His names and attributes. It is also intended to teach people their duties and responsibilities and how to transact affairs among themselves. It contains examples of how Allah deals with people in terms of promises and warnings. Ibn al-Qayim commented on this *surah*:

*Surah al-Ikhlās* sums up the monotheistic belief. It pinpoints the idea of Oneness, which is the opposite of partnership, and the idea of absolution. It negates His having any son or parent, which is requisite for absolution; it denies His having a peer; and it consequently rejects any sort of comparison or anthropomorphism. Thus it affirms His wholeness and rejects any sign of imperfection or partnership for Him. These are the foundations of the

monotheistic belief that keeps man safe from polytheism or heresy.<sup>1</sup>

As for the *ayah*, it is *Ayah al-Kursi* (the verse of the Throne), which was described by the Prophet as the Most ennobled *ayah* in the Qur'an. <<**Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the One Who Sustains and Protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep can overtake Him. To Him belong whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except by His permission. He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.**>> (2:255)

This great *ayah* involves all three aspects of monotheism. Each one of the names and attributes mentioned in it epitomizes a certain principle of Islam. For instance: <<**Allah, there is no god but He.**>> establishes an important principle, that of godhead, which substantiates the concept of monotheism and the whole Islamic way of life. This concept requires that one should be a servant of God alone, worship and obey Him only, resort to Him alone for judgement and legislation, and have Him only as a source of attaining knowledge, values, and ethics.

<<**The Ever-Living, the One Who Sustains and Protects**>> affirms two attributes: the Ever-Living means the eternal, without beginning or end. His life was not given to Him by someone else like the lives of His creatures whose lives He gave them. The One

<sup>1</sup> *The Provision for the Return*, vol.1, p 81-82.



Who Sustains and Protects means the organizer of the world and the lives of all creatures. He preserves, sustains, and cares for them in the way He wishes.

These two names are the greatest because the rest of the names are based on them. Self-existing negates Allah's being in want of anybody. He sustains others and all beings rely on His existence and His dispensing of matters.

The two names have a great effect on the life of any Muslim who really believes in what they stand for. These two attributes induce a strong link in man's conscience to God through love, worship, and submission. When man knows that everything around him is run by means of the wisdom and flawless planning of Allah, he can adjust his life according to this law based on such wisdom. Man will make this code his own censor from which he acquires his own values. The statement <<***Neither slumber nor sleep can overtake Him.***>> confirms Allah's power to sustain and organize everything because slumber and sleep contradict the sense of living and self-subsistence. In saying <<***To Him belong whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth.***>> Allah affirms His absolute ownership of all things devoid of partners. If such a belief rests in the hearts of people, it will have the greatest effect on their lives.

Sayed Qutb (may Allah have mercy on his soul) said:

Providence belongs to Allah. Thus no one else has any ownership of anything. People are granted transitory authority in the land by Allah who is the real owner. They must respect the conditions of this permission granted to them by the Owner. Such conditions were made clear to them in the items of the *Shari'ah* (the Law). People are not allowed to deviate from them, otherwise this granted authority will be nullified. If a man grasps the idea of who

the real owner is, that he really does not actually own any of his possessions, and that his ownership is temporary and that the real Owner will take it back in due time, man will cease his greed, miserliness, and wild racing. Realizing such a fact will pour into man's heart a feeling of tranquillity and satisfaction for what he has. It will encourage him to give charity even with the little he has. It will also save him from regretting what he misses and from dying for expectations.<sup>1</sup>

**<<Who is he that can intercede with Him except by His permission?>>** manifests the difference between the status of God and the status of man. Every creature is a servant to God and should not transcend this limit. Intercession is not in the power of any creature unless God permits it. In this way, Islam makes a distinction between the concept of God and the concept of servitude of His creatures to Him, so the two concepts do not intermingle or appear to have shared qualities.<sup>2</sup>

**<<He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His knowledge except that which He wills.>>** stresses the limitlessness of God's knowledge of time, place, and things. It reflects, as a corollary, the incomplete knowledge that His creatures possess, except for those whom He wills to enlighten. When man believes in these characteristics of Allah, he will always observe his limits with Allah and be willing to repent if he makes mistakes. If man truly understands himself and how great the bounties of Allah are, insofar as knowledge, man will always be grateful to Allah and refrain from arrogance and disrespect.

<sup>1</sup> Sayed Qutb, *In the Shade of Qur'an*, vol. 1 pp.420-421.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1 pp.420-421.

The statement << *His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them.*>> indicates His authority over everything that exists.

This great *ayah* is concluded by mentioning two of His Noble Names: <<*And He is the Most High, the Most Great*>>. The first name suggests his elevated status over His servants. Whoever dares to reach this status, Allah will condemn him to humiliation in the present life and torture him in the Hereafter. Most Great means everything is below Him, nothing is greater than Him. Full awareness of this truth will induce submission to Allah, conscientiousness for others, and prevent tyrannical and arrogant attitudes.

These are some of the noble features of *Ayah al-Kursi* (The Verse of the Throne). Every Muslim should read it with careful contemplation of its meanings and observe the duties implied by it. There are many Traditions (*Hadith*) expounding its excellence, like the one narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira, in which the Prophet (peace be unto him) said to him:

When you go to bed, read the *Verse of the Throne*. Allah will send you a guardian angel and Satan will not come near you till the morning.<sup>1</sup>

It was also narrated in *Sahih Muslim* that Ubayy ibn Ka'b said that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said:

O Abu Mundhir, do you know the verse in the Book of Allah that is the greatest? I said: Allah and His Apostle (peace be unto him) know best. He again said: O Abu Mundhir, do you know the verse from the Book of Allah

<sup>1</sup> See *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

that is the greatest? I said: <<*Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists.*>> Thereupon he patted me on my breast and said: May knowledge be pleasant for you Abu Mundhir.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.1768.

## The Belief in Angels

Belief in the angels is one of the six pillars of faith. It means to believe that Allah has angels. He created them from light, they never disobey His commands, and they carry out certain tasks Allah ordered them to do.

Thus, they are one kind of Allah's creatures. One is not considered a real believer till one believes in their existence and in everything the Qur'an and *Sunnah* mention about them, their characteristics, and their activities, without additions, omissions, or change. <<*The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do men of faith, each one of them believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and Messengers.*>> (2:285)

The Prophet also said in the Hadith narrated by Muslim on the authority of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) when the Angel Gabriel asked him about the meaning of *iman* (faith) that:

You affirm your faith in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, the Day of Judgment, and affirm your faith in the Divine Decree of good and evil.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the existence of angels was given with undeniable evidence and subsequent denial of their existence is considered, according to the Qur'an and the general consent of Muslims, as an act of infidelity and atheism. <<*Any who denies Allah, His Angles, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgment has gone far astray.*>> (4:136)

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.1.

Tracing the verses and Prophetic Traditions that describe angels will reveal that they describe their relation with the Creator, the universe, and with man. In this way Allah helps us to keep our faith pure, our hearts clean, and our deeds correct

The details of how angels were created are kept as Allah's hidden knowledge. Allah did not inform us of all the unseen facts related to Him, His attributes, or His unseen creatures; He made Islamic belief to encompass only the facts of the universe that the human mind could conceive and make use of in this life and the life to come.

The true believer must admit whatever the Creator said in general and detail, without addition, omission, or involvement in things beyond his scope, i.e. that which he is not authorized to know.

### **Characteristic Features of Angels**

Allah has only given us a very few details about the way angels look. He said in the Qur'an they were created before Adam (may peace be upon him) and that He informed them of His plan to create man to dwell on earth: *<<And when your Lord said to the angels: Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth. They said: Will you place therein those who make mischief therein and shed blood,—while we glorify You with praises and thanks and sanctify You. He said: I know that which you do not.> (2:30)*

The Prophet also said they were created from light. It was narrated by Muslim, on the authority of Aisha that the Apostle of Allah said:

The angels were created out of light, the *jinn*s were created from the spark of fire, and Adam was created from

as he has been defined (in the Qur'an) for you (i.e. he was fashioned out of clay).<sup>1</sup>

All the texts point out that angels are luminous creatures with no palpable physical existence. They do not eat, drink, or procreate; they are above animal desires, sin, and mistakes; and they have no human characteristics. Yet they can, with the permission of Allah, appear in the form of human beings. Allah said that the Angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary in a human form: *<<And mention in the Book (the Qur'an, O Muhammad, the story of) Mary, when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our angel Gabriel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.>> (19:16-17)*

Angels are also mentioned in the famous Hadith when the angel Gabriel came to teach the companions about Islam, *iman*, and the Day of Judgment. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said he came

Dressed in extremely white clothes, and having extraordinarily black hair, and no apparent signs of fatigue from the long journey, he leaned on his knees in front of us and placed his hands on his thighs and then he started to question the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>2</sup>

Another feature of angels that Allah informed us of was that they have different numbers of wings: *<<All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings,—two or three or four. He increases in creation what He wills. Verily, Allah is able to do all*

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.7134.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.1.

*things.>>* (35:1) It was also narrated by Muslim on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud that the Prophet saw the Angel Gabriel having six hundred wings.<sup>1</sup>

This is exactly what Allah has informed us of regarding the characteristic features of those noble creatures. We believe in what was said and do not inquire about what was not said. Had there been any benefit in a more detailed explanation, Allah would have informed us because He is the Most Merciful and Omniscient in knowing what knowledge is the most beneficial to His servants.

### **Honoured Servants**

The relationship of the angels to Allah is that of absolute service, obedience, and submission to His commands. They are not gods, or as the earlier polytheists claimed, sons and daughters of God. *<<And they say: 'The Most Beneficent (Allah) has begotten a son (or children).' Glory be to Him! They (those whom they call children of Allah i.e., the angels, Jesus—son of Mary, Ezra, etc.), are but honoured slaves. They speak not until He has spoken, and they act on His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is well pleased. And they stand in awe for fear of Him.>>* (21:26 to 28) *<<They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded.>>* (16:50) *<<...over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.>>* (66:6)

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Al-Bukhari, no. 1366.



Thus it stands that they are only one of many kinds of Allah's creatures. They are incapable of doing things by themselves or even suggesting things to be done. All that they do is worship Allah and carry out His commands. <<*There is not one of us (angels) but has his known place (or position). Verily, we (angels), we stand in rows for the prayers (as you Muslims stand in rows for your prayers). Verily, we (angels), we are they who glorify (Allah's praises i.e. perform prayers).*>> (37:164 to 166)

It is an act of polytheism (*shirk*) for anyone to worship angels, seek their help, or presume they have any authority. <<*Nor would He order you to take angels and the prophets for lords (gods). Would He order you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allah's will?*>> (3:80)

## **The Relationship of Angels to Man and the Universe**

The relationship of angels to God is that of servitude, therefore their relationship with man and the universe is but one aspect of this service. They worship Allah not only through praising Him but also through carrying out His commands in managing and administering the universe over its animate and inanimate inhabitants. They witness Allah's decrees for all creatures which are executed the way He wishes and they record every voluntary or involuntary movement in the universe. <<*And those (angels) who distribute (provisions, rain, and other blessings) by (Allah's) command...*>> (51:4) It was cited in both the Qur'an and *Sunnah* that angels are of different types according to the different tasks they perform and the creatures in their charge. There are angels in charge of the sun and the moon, galaxies, mountains, rainfall, wombs (to protect),

death, and some which surround all creatures and every phenomenon taking place in the universe, etc.

There may be some phenomena and laws that seem to be interdependent as they are related to one another by means of cause and effect. This does not contradict the general rule because such phenomena and laws are still ordained by Allah and still in the charge of angels. The human mind cannot comprehend so it is only through the essence of Allah and His angels that they are preserved.

Man, being one of Allah's creatures, is also part of the responsibility of angels. Man is the only creature to whom the universe has been subordinate: <<***See you not (O men) that Allah has subjected for you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth...***>> (31:20) So, when the angels work to sustain the universe, with Allah's permission, they subsequently aid man, Allah's viceroy and representative on earth, in his task.

Furthermore, the angels have other duties that Allah relegated to them such as guiding people and helping them to worship Allah. Allah also chose an angel, Gabriel, to be His intermediary between Himself and His Apostle. <<***And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds, which the trustworthy Gabriel has brought down; upon your heart (O Muhammad), that you may be (one) of the warners.***>> (26:192 to 194)

The angels attend to man all his life for the purpose of guiding him to what is good. The Prophet said:

Satan whispers to the son of Adam, and the angel whispers to the son of Adam. What Satan whispers is the evil promise and the denial of what is righteous; and what the angels whisper is the good promise and belief of what is

righteous. If one finds this (the second), one realizes that it is from Allah and if otherwise one should seek the refuge of Allah from Satan. Then the Apostle of Allah read: **<<Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit sins; whereas Allah promises you Forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing.>> (2:268)**

Allah also informed us that the angels were commanded by Him to supplicate and ask Allah's forgiveness on behalf of the believers: **<<Those (angels) who bear the Throne (of Allah), and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord, and believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe: Our Lord! You comprehend all thing in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who repent and follow Your Way, and save them from the torment of the blazing Fire! Our Lord! And make them enter the everlasting Gardens ('Adn Paradise) which You have promised them, and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their offspring! Verily, You are the Almighty, the All-Wise And save them from (the punishment, because of what they did of) the sins, and whomsoever You save from the sins that Day, him verily You have taken into mercy. And that is the supreme success.>> (40:7 to 9)**

The Prophet also said in this context:

There is never a day wherein servants of (God) get up at morn, but are not visited by two angels. One of them says: O Allah, give more to him who spends (for the sake of Allah). And the other says: O Allah, bring destruction upon the stingy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Muslim, no.2205.

Angels work to encourage people to worship and remember Allah, read Qur'an, attain knowledge, and do good things. What appears in more than one sound tradition (Hadith *Sahih*) is that they accompany the person while praying and reading Qur'an. There is the Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Huraira in which the Prophet said:

A man's prayer in congregation is more valuable than his prayers in his house by twenty degrees or more, when he performs ablution well then goes to the mosque impelled to do so only by the love of congregational prayer and having no other objective before him but to worship Allah, the Glorious. In this case, he does not take a step without being raised a degree for it and having a sin remitted, till he enters the mosque; and when he is busy in prayer after having entered the mosque, the angels continue to invoke blessings on him as long as he is in his place of worship, saying: O Allah, show him mercy, and pardon him! Accept his repentance so long as he does not do any harm, or as long as his ablution is not broken.<sup>1</sup>

Again, it was narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet said:

Angels take turns by night and day, and they all assemble at the dawn and afternoon prayers. Those (of the angels) who spend the night among you, then ascend, and their Lord asks them, though He is the best informed about them how they left His servants. They say: We left them while they were praying and we came to them while they were praying.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.1394.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.1320.

As for the angels who attend the assemblies in which Allah is remembered, the Prophet said:

Allah has mobile squads of angels who have no other work to attend to but to follow the assemblies of those who practice remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*). When they find such assemblies in which there is *dhikr* (of Allah), they sit in them and some of them surround the others with their wings till the space between them and the sky of the world is fully covered, and when they disperse (after the assembly of *dhikr* is adjourned) they go upward to the heavens. Allah, the Exalted, the Glorious, asks them, although He is best informed about them, where they have been. They say: We come from Your servants upon the earth who have been glorifying You (reciting *Subhan Allah*), uttering Your greatness (saying *Allahu Akbar*), and affirming Your Oneness (saying *la ilaha ila Allah*), praising You (saying *al-hamdulillah*), and begging of You. He would say: What do they beg of Me? They would say: They beg of You entrance into Paradise. He would say: Have they seen My Paradise? They would say: No, our Lord. He would say: What then would they say if they were to see My Paradise? The angels would say: They would seek Your protection. He (the Lord) would say: Against what do they seek My protection? The angels would say: O our Lord, against the Hellfire. He, the Lord, would say: Have they seen My fire? They would say: No. He, the Lord, would say: What would they say if they were to see My fire? The angels would say: They would beg Your forgiveness. He would say: I grant pardon to them and confer upon them what they ask for and grant them protection against that which they seek protection. The angels would again say: Our Lord, there is one among them who happened to pass by (that assembly) and sat there

along with them. He (the Lord) would say: I also grant him pardon, for they are people of who are in no way unfortunate.<sup>1</sup>

The angels also encourage people to learn. The Prophet said:

Whosoever goes from his house in quest of knowledge, the angels put down their wings before him in satisfaction of what he does.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, they help the believers to hold fast to good deeds especially striving in the cause of Allah (*jihad*). **<<When your Lord inspired the angels: Verily, I am with you, so keep firm those who have believed. I shall cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved, so strike them over the necks and smite over all their fingers and toes.>> (8:12)**

Among the tasks of the angels, which Allah informed us of, are the observation and record-taking of people's actions. Such tasks aid in diverting people from evil. **<<And indeed We have created man, and We know what his own self whispers to him. And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Remember) that the two Receivers (recording angels) receive (each human after he or she has attained the age of puberty), one sitting on the right and one on the left (to note his or her actions). Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it).>> (50:16 to 18) <<But verily, over you (are appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you. Honourable in Allah's Sight—writing down (your deeds). They know all that you do.>> (82:10 to 12) <<Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private council? (Yes We do) and Our Messengers**

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Muslim, no.6505.

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, *Al-Targheeb wa at-Tarheeb*, p 104.

*(appointed angels in charge of mankind) are by them, to record.>> (43:80)*

To sum up the relationship between mankind and the angels, it is worth noting the statement by Ibn al-Qayim (may Allah have mercy on him) from his book, *Rescuing the Troubled from the Traps of Satan*:

Angels are responsible for man, from the drop of sperm until his death. They are authorized and warranted by Allah to guard every phase of his existence, and to preserve him in times of darkness (in the womb and the grave). They write down his wealth, deeds, age, and states of happiness and unhappiness. They register what is said and done, and attend him when he is alive and take his soul to the Creator when he dies. They are also authorized to attend people in the life of Partition (*barzakh*), the life after death and before the Resurrection. They are authorized to handle the different tools of reward or punishment. They help man to be steadfast in hard times. They teach man what benefits him. They are his supporters and defenders in this life. They call man to what is right and warn him against evil. They protect, teach, advise, supplicate on behalf of, and ask Allah's forgiveness for man. They pray for man as long as he obeys Allah and teaches his fellowmen what is right. They bring man the good tidings of Allah's blessings on him either during his sleep, at his death bed, and at Resurrection. They help man to become ascetic, only longing for the best in the Hereafter. They help him to remember (the good deeds) when he forgets, to be active when he gets lazy, and to be calm when he is scared. They are Allah's messengers to His servants descending from

heaven with Divine commands and ascend to Heaven with what they report.<sup>1</sup>

## The Number of Angels

The angels are too many to be counted. They are uncountable to anyone except to Allah. <<*And We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire, and We have set their number (19) only as a trial for the disbelievers—in order that the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) may arrive at a certainty and the believers may increase in faith—and that no doubts may be left for the people of the Scripture and the believers, and that those in whose hearts is a disease (of hypocrisy) and the disbelievers may say: ‘What does Allah intend by this (curious) example? Thus Allah leads astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And none can know the hosts of your Lord but He. And this (Hell) is nothing else than (warning) reminder to mankind.*>> (74:31)

The Prophet also said on the authority of Abu Dhar, as narrated by Ibn Majah and Al-Bazzar:

The sky was sagging and it had the right to sag. There was hardly any space for four fingers put together, without having a prostrating angel in it.<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet also mentioned in the context of talking about *Al-Mir'aj*:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Qayim, *Rescuing the Troubled from the Traps of Satan*, vol.2, pp. 125-126.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sahih Al-Bukhari*.



Then al-Bait al-Ma'mur (i.e. the Sacred House) was shown to me. Every day seventy thousand angels enter it.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Belief in Angels in Tenet and Principle**

We should believe in all the angels whose names were mentioned in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The archangels are Gabriel, Michael, and Israhiel. Gabriel is the angel authorized by Allah to convey the guiding revelation. His name, together with Michael's was mentioned in the Qur'an: *<<Whoever is an enemy of Gabriel (let him die in his in fury), for indeed he has brought it (this Qur'an) to your heart by Allah's permission, confirming what came down before it (i.e. the Torah and the Gospel) and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers. Whoever is the enemy to Allah, His angels, and His Messengers, and Gabriel and Michael, then verily, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.>> (2:97-98)* Again, Allah praised him in the Qur'an and gave him the best description: *<<So verily, I swear by the planets that recede (i.e. disappear during the day and appear during the night). And by the planets that move swiftly and hide themselves, and by the night as it departs; and by the dawn as it brightens. Verily, this is the Word (this Qur'an brought by) a most honourable Messenger (Gabriel, from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad). Owner of power, and high rank with (Allah) the Lord of the Throne, obeyed (by the angels), trustworthy there (in The heavens). (81:15 to 21) <<He has been taught (this Qur'an) by one mighty in power (Gabriel). Endowed with wisdom, he appeared for (him) standing poised; while on the highest horizon.>> (53:5 to 7)*

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Al-Bukhari, no.1589.

Michael is the angel in charge of the rain that revives the earth, plants, and animals. Israhiel is the angel of the Trumpet who signals the beginning of the Resurrection. Malik is the angel whose name is mentioned in the Qur'an and the Hadith *Sahih* (Sound Traditions), as the gatekeeper of Hell. <<***And they will cry: 'O Malik! Let your Lord make an end of us!' He will say: Verily you will abide forever.***>> (43:77)

It is incumbent upon us to believe in those angels whose names were mentioned and the others whose names were not mentioned in the Traditions, and we must believe in their mandates. As for the angels who were not mentioned individually, they were mentioned in general in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. For example, there are the honourable recording angels about whom Allah said: <<***But verily, over you (are appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you. Honourable in Allah's Sight—writing down (your deeds). They know all that you do.***>> (82:10 to 12) <<***For each (person), there are angels in succession, before and behind him. They guard him by command of Allah.***>> (13:11), <<***Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsels? (Yes We do) and our Messengers (appointed angels in charge of mankind) are by them, to record.***>> (43:80)

According to some books of commentary (*tafseer*), there are two recording angels. One is on the right and one is on the left writing down each person's deeds; the one on the right writes the good deeds and the one on the left writes the bad deeds. There are also two angels for safeguarding each person, one in front of him and one behind. Thus each person is surrounded by four angels. It was narrated in *Sahih Muslim* on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

There is none among you without and attendee from among the *jinn* (devil).<sup>1</sup> They (the Companions) said: O Messenger of Allah, and with you too? Thereupon he said: Yes, but Allah protected me against him and so I am safe from his hand and so he does not command me but for what is good.

We also believe in the angel of death who is responsible for returning the soul to Allah. <<***Say: The angel of death, who is set over you, will take your souls, then you will be brought back to your Lord.***>> (32:11) The Qur'an and the Traditions did not declare any name for him but early books referred to him as Azrael and Allah knows best.<sup>2</sup>

Belief in the Throne bearers is also incumbent upon us. <<***And the angels will be on all its sides, and eight angels will, that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them.***>> (69:17) Among them is Israphiel, the horn-blower.<sup>3</sup>

We believe in the angels of punishment who are responsible for Hell (may Allah Protect us from it). They are preceded by nineteen angels. <<***And those in the Fire will say to the keepers (angels) of Hell: Call upon your Lord to lighten for us the torment for a day.***>> (40:49) <<***O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern and severe, who disobey not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which what they are commanded.***>> (66:6) <<***Over it are nineteen (angels as guardians and keepers of Hell). And We***

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<sup>1</sup> Sahih Muslim, no.6757.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad b. Abdul Wahaab, *The Basis of Iman*, p 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p 14.

*have set none but angels as guardians over the Fire...>> (74:30-31)*

We do also believe in the angels of Paradise, who prepare it for its prospective inhabitants. They prepare food, drinks, clothes, and other things that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no mind has ever imagined.

### **Man and the Belief in Angels**

It was formerly stated that Allah never lets us know anything of unseen unless the knowledge of it is useful for us, and it is a mercy upon us that He has introduced those noble creatures to us. Believing in them is one part of the general belief in the unseen that Allah directed the believers to affirm. *<A.L.M. This is the Book, whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are pious. Who believe in the Unseen and offer prayers perfectly and spend out of what we have provided for them.>> (2:1-2)* Believing in angels has great effects on the life of the believer. Among those effects:

- When Allah enlightened us regarding the believing angels and their doings, He spared us from stumbling into the falsehoods and illusions of other people, who did not believe in the unseen and did not receive their knowledge from Divine revelation, had stumbled into.
- It also helps us to reconstruct our lives according to Allah's commands, because the one who feels, in his heart, the presence of Allah's angels and knows that their observation of his doings and sayings will bear witness, he may feel shame in the presence of Allah and them. Therefore, he will less likely misbehave or disobey Allah, either in secret or public. How would one be so

bold when he knows his actions are being watched over and recorded?

Believing in angels helps one to adhere to patience and *jihad* (i.e. striving in the path of Allah). It also promotes a feeling of optimism and comfort when people feel lost, when ignorance prevails, when the believers become strangers in their own homelands, and when their own people mock and discourage them from following the straight path. In such situations, the believer will find a companion to sympathize with, console, comfort, and encourage him to pursue the right path. Angels worship Allah and turn to Him in the same manner mankind does. They remind man of Allah's reward. Thus the believer is not alone on his journey to Allah. He is making strides toward Allah in the company of a great and honourable multitude. Consciousness of this fact produces greater patience and perseverance against aggression.

## **Belief in the Prophets and the Messengers**

Belief in the Prophets and the Messengers of God is one of the pillars of *imān*. It means to believe in all the Prophets and Messengers whom Allah named in His Book, and to believe that Allah sent other Messengers than those mentioned, though neither their precise number nor their identities are known except to God. *<<And indeed We have sent Messengers before you; some of them We have related to you their story and some We have not related to you their story...>> (40:78) <<And for every Ummah (a community or a nation), there is a messenger...>> (10:47)*

### **The Prophets and Messengers<sup>1</sup> Mentioned in the Qur'an**

They are exclusively twenty-five: Adam, Noah, Idris, Salih, Abraham, Hud, Lot, Jonah, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Shu'aib, Moses, Aaron, Elisha, Dhul-Kifl, David, Solomon, Zachariah, Elias, John, Jesus, Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all).

There are eighteen of them mentioned in the following verses in which Allah said: *<<And that was our proof which We gave Abraham against his people We raise whom We will in degrees. Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-knowing. And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob, each of them We guided, and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny David, Solomon,*

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<sup>1</sup> A prophet is the one who received revelation from God. If he was not ordered to inform others of it, then he is only a prophet. If he was ordered to inform others of it, then he is a prophet-messenger. Thus a messenger is necessarily a prophet but not vice versa.

*Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good-doers. And Zachariah, and John and Jesus and Elias each one of them was of the righteous. And Ismail and Elisha, and Jonah and Lot, and each one of them We preferred above mankind and jinn> (6:83 to 86)*

The others are mentioned in different parts of Qur'an. <<*To the 'Ad people (We sent) their brother Hud...*>> (11:50) <<*To the Thamud people (We sent) their brother Salih...*>> (11:61) <<*To the Madyan people (We sent) their brother Shu'aib...*>> (11:84) <<*Allah chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above mankind and jinn.*>> (3:33) <<*And (remember) Ismail, and Enoch, and Dhul-Kifl, all were from among those who observe patience.*>>(21:85) <<*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves.*>> (48:29)

It is incumbent upon all of mankind to believe in these Prophets and Messengers and every detail of their messages. If one denies the prophethood or the message of any of them, one becomes a disbeliever.<sup>1</sup> We are also directed to believe in all those Prophets and Messengers whose stories were not mentioned in the Qur'an. We are forbidden to accept the prophethood of any human being who was not among the recognized Prophets and Messengers either in the Qur'an or *Sunnah*.

## **Messengers of Binding Resolution (*Uloul-'Azm*)<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> One is not accused of infidelity for denying a prophet until he learns the truth and then denies it.

<sup>2</sup> *Al-'Azm* (firm resolution) means earnestness and devoted effort. The Qur'an pointed out that the most important requisite for 'Azm is patience

This category of Messengers includes five, as most scholars have pointed out: Muhammad, Abraham, Moses, Noah, and Jesus (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them). <<***And (remember) We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you (O Muhammad), from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus,— son of Mary. We took from them a strong covenant***>> (33:7)

### **The Theme of the Message**

We are obliged to believe that Allah sent His messengers to His creatures to inform them of the glad tidings of Allah's satisfaction with them, news of His reward and news of Paradise in case they believe in and obey Him. They also warn all creatures of Allah's anger in case they disbelieve or disobey Him. <<***And We send not the Messengers but as givers of glad tidings and as warners. So whosoever believes and does righteous good deeds, upon such shall come no fear, nor will they grieve. But those who reject Our Ayat (verses, revelations, signs, etc.), the torment will touch them for their disbelief.***>> (6:48-49)

We must also believe Allah sent all the Messengers for one fundamental purpose, which is to worship God, establish His religion, and admit His Oneness of godhead, lordship, and names and attributes. ***And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We inspired him saying: None has the right to be worshipped but I, so worship Me.***>> (21:25) <<***He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion which He ordained for Noah, and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and***

***and piety: <<Therefore, patiently persevere, as did (all) Messengers of firm resolution.>>(46:35)***



*Jesus saying you should establish religion and make no divisions in it.>> (42:13) <<And verily, We have sent among every nation (proclaiming): Worship Allah and do not worship false deities.>> (16:36)*

## **Our Duty Toward the Messengers**

We have to believe what all the Messengers said, without making distinctions among them. Whoever believes in some and denies the others, or believes in what some said but rejects what the others said will be, as indicated in the Qur'an, an unbeliever: *<<Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make a distinction between Allah and His Messengers saying, 'We believe in some and reject others' and wish to adopt a way in between, they are in truth disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating torment. (4:150-151)<sup>1</sup>* We have to believe that everyone of the Messengers did his duty with the utmost degree of sincerity and efficiency and endeavoured to clarify the message in the best way.

We should also obey them as a sign of obeying Allah is stated in Qur'an: *<<He who obeys the Messenger, has indeed obeyed Allah...>> (4:80), and <<We sent no, Messenger but to be obeyed by Allah's leave.>> (4:64)*

Again, we should believe the Messengers were the most perfect of human creation in respect to their knowledge, doings, and manners.

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<sup>1</sup> At-Tabary explained that when they say this, they are like the Jews when they believed in Moses and those who came before him, but disbelieved in Muhammad and Jesus. The Christians also believed in Jesus and those before him, but disbelieved in Muhammad.

Allah favoured them, before all others, with special blessings. He raised them above major and minor sins such as telling lies, betrayal, or being reluctant to spread their message. They might have fallen into error, like that of Adam when he ate from the forbidden tree in forgetfulness, so they had to repent., but in regard to their high status, major sins were unacceptable.

We also have to believe all the Messengers of Allah were human and not angels. They were also men and not women. <<*And We sent not before you but men to whom We inspired...*>> (21:7)

We have to believe Allah did not create them with superhuman characteristics. He chose them to be men who could eat, drink, walk in marketplaces, sleep, sit, laugh, have spouses and children, be oppressed and hurt by others, die, suffer assassination without just cause, and experience pain and illnesses like the rest of mankind. This never degraded their high status, and the Qur'an stated this in many of its verses: <<*Mohammed is no more than a Messenger, and indeed Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back to disbelief? And he who turns back to disbelief, not the least harm will he do to Allah, and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.*>> (3:144) <<*And We never sent before you any of the Messengers but verily, they ate food and walked in the markets.*>> (25:20) <<*And indeed We sent Messengers before you, and made for them wives and offspring.*>> (13:38) <<*The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary was no more than a Messenger, many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was righteous. They both used to eat food (as any other human being, while Allah does not eat).*>> (5:75))

Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) also said in this context:

I observe prayer, and sleep too; I observe fast and also eat, I marry women also <sup>1</sup>

He used to get sick, hurt, hungry, thirsty, angry, bored, tired, and experience other conditions that did not degrade or diminish his status.

We have to believe the Messengers had no divine qualities. They could neither sustain or administrate the universe, nor had they the power to benefit or harm others. They could never change the will of God or know the future except for what Allah revealed to them.

***<<Say: I possess no power of benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills. If I had the knowledge of the Unseen, I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe.>> (7:188) <<He is the All-Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals to none His Unseen. Except to a Messenger whom He has chosen...>> (72:26-27)***

Allah endowed them with special qualifications and distinct features and manners to be fit for the task of receiving the revelation and bearing the heavy burden of spreading the message by being good examples for people to follow both in worldly and religious affairs. Therefore, we are required to believe that they were raised without any sign of imperfection concerning their piety or obedience to Allah or their ability to convey the message. Allah said in their favour: ***<<This is the Guidance of Allah with which He guides whomsoever He wills of His slaves. But if they had joined in the worship of others with Allah, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them. They are those whom We gave the Book, and Prophethood. But if these disbelieve therein, then,***

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Muslim, no.3236.

***indeed We have entrusted it to a people who are not disbelievers therein.>> (6:88-89)***

Allah the Almighty endowed them with honesty, truthfulness, wit, and fitness to convey the message. Thus they were up to the responsibility Allah laid upon their shoulders. Allah Himself confirmed their being true. He said about Ismail (may peace be upon him): ***<<And mention in the Book Ismail. Verily! He was true to what he promised, and he was a Messenger, Prophet.>> (19:54)*** He said about Abraham (may peace be upon him): ***<<And mention in the Book Abraham. Verily He was a man of truth, a prophet>> (19:41)***

We have to believe Allah supported His Messenger with magnificent miracles and clear signs to indicate the veracity of the messages they brought from Allah the Most High. Miracles mean the supernatural phenomena Allah allowed to happen at the hands of His Messengers to be a provocation to their peoples. Such miracles which were mentioned in Qur'an and Hadith and their authenticity should not be questioned.

Although all the Messengers were equal in what Allah bestowed upon them, yet we have to believe Allah raised some of them above others. ***<<Those Messengers! We preferred some to others; to some of them Allah spoke (directly); others He raised of degrees (of honour); and to Jesus, the son of Mary, We gave the clear proofs and evidences, and supported him with Gabriel.>> (2:253)***

We believe the most honourable of the prophets as well as all creatures is our Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah (peace be unto him). Such a fact is clearly stated in many sound Hadiths. Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) as saying:

I shall be pre-eminent among the descendants of Adam on the Day of Resurrection and I shall be the first intercessor and the first whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah).<sup>1</sup>

It was also narrated by Wathila ibn Asqa' that he heard Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) as saying:

Verily, Allah granted eminence to Kinanah, from among the descendants of Ismail, and He granted eminence to the Quraish, among Kinanah, and He granted eminence to Banu Hashim, from among the Quraish, and He granted me eminence, from the tribe of Banu Hashim.<sup>2</sup>

Such Traditions, and others, indicate that Muhammad (peace be unto him) is the best of all mankind.<sup>3</sup>

### **Believing in Muhammad (peace be unto him)**

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.5655.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.5653.

<sup>3</sup> As for what was narrated that the Prophet (peace be unto him)said:

Don't make distinctions between me and Moses.

What the Prophet condemned in this context was to make a distinction with pride that aims at degrading the other person. This Hadith was said on the occasion when a Jew said:

By Allah, who chose Moses (may peace be upon him) among mankind.

A Muslim slapped him on the face saying:

You dare to say this where as Allah's Messenger is living with us?

The Jew went and complained to the Prophet (peace be unto him) who said:

Don't make distinctions between the prophets. (*Sahih Muslim*, no.5853)

We must believe that Muhammad ibn Abdullah is Allah's Prophet, Messenger, servant, and favourite. Muhammad never worshipped an idol and never committed a major nor a minor sin. He was the last in the chain of prophets. This fact was stated in the Qur'an: <<.but he is the Messenger of Allah, and the last of the prophets.>> (33:40 And Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) said that:

The similitude of mine and that of the Apostles before me is that of a person who built a house, quite imposing and beautiful, and made it complete but for a brick in the corner. People began to walk around it, and the building pleased them and they would say: But for this brick, your building would have been perfect. I am the final brick and I am the final Prophet.<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet also said:

I am Muhammad, I am Ahmed, I am *Al-Mahi* (the Obliterator) by whom unbelief would be obliterated, and I am *Hashir* (the Gatherer) at whose feet people will be gathered, and I am *'Aqib* (the Last to Come) after whom there will be no prophet.<sup>2</sup>

We should hold firm to the belief that there was and will not be a prophet after him and that anybody who assumes prophethood is a mere liar. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said that:

There would arise about thirty impostors and liars and each one of them would claim that he is the messenger of Allah.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.5674.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.5810.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, no.6988.

We must affirm our belief that Muhammad (peace be unto him) is the leader (*imam*) for all the believers and should be followed in all matters of goodness. He is the only person worthy of being imitated. <<***Say: If you love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins.>>*** (3:31) <<***But no, by your Lord, they can have no faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with the full submission.>>*** (4:65)

It should be believed that he is the most favoured by Allah, the Most Merciful. Muhammad (peace be unto him) attained the highest degree of Allah's love, a degree which is termed *khillah* (great intimacy and friendship). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) said:

If I were to choose a bosom friend, I would have chosen Abu Bakr as my bosom friend, but he is my brother and my companion and Allah the Exalted and Glorious has taken your brother and companion (meaning himself) as a friend.<sup>1</sup> •

We believe without doubt that Muhammad (peace be unto him) was sent to the *jinn*, as well as humans, to guide them to what is right. Allah narrated in Qur'an that the Jinns said: <<***O our people! Respond to Allah's Caller and believe in Him. He (Allah) will forgive you of your sins, and save you from a painful torment.>>*** (46:31)

As for his being sent to the whole of humanity: <<***And We have not sent you except as a giver of glad tidings and as warner to all***

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.5871.

*mankind, but most of men know not.>> (34:28) <<Say: O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah.>> (7:158) <<Blessed is He Who sent down the criterion to His slave that he may be a warner to mankind and jinn.>> (25:1)*

His being sent to all mankind is something taken for granted in Islam. The Prophet himself said in a *Hadith*:

I have been given precedence over the other prophets in six respects: I have been given wisdom (words which are concise but comprehensive in meaning); I have been helped by placing terror (in the hearts of enemies); spoils have been made lawful to me; the earth has been made for me clean and a place of worship; I have been sent to all mankind; and the line of prophets ends with me.<sup>1</sup>

One should love the Prophet more than one's father, son, and oneself. The Prophet said in a Hadith narrated by Anas:

None of you is a believer until I am dearer to him than his child, his father, and the whole of mankind<sup>2</sup>

It was also narrated by Abdullah ibn Hashim that he said:

We were with the Prophet (peace be unto him) and he was holding the hand of Umar ibn al-Khattab. Umar said to him: You are dearer to me than everything except my own self. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said: No, by Him in whose Hand my soul is, (you will not have complete faith) till I am dearer to you than your own self. Then Umar said to him: Now, by Allah, you are dearest to me than my

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.1062.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.71.



own self. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said: Now, O Umar (now you are a believer).<sup>1</sup>

We have to believe that Allah supported Muhammad (peace be unto him) with miracles confirming the truthfulness of His Message. The Qur'an itself can be regarded as one of those magnificent miracles by which the Prophet took on the whole world. No one was able to write anything similar to it, not even one *ayah*. <<***And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (Qur'an) to Our slave (Muhammad), then produce a chapter of the like thereof and call your witnesses besides Allah, if you are truthful. But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.***>> (2:23-24)

Allah supported Muhammad (peace be unto him) with visible miracles such as, when the moon split into two halves, when the stone saluted him, when the trunk of a tree yearned to him, when water sprang from among his fingers, when multitudes of people ate till they were full although the amount of food was very little, when the grilled lamb gave testimony in front of him, when clouds shaded him before revelation, when Abu Jahl tried to hit him in the head with a stone and missed, when he stroked the breast of Um Ma'bab's goat with his blessed hands and when the dust flew in the face of an unbeliever. Also we can add his ability to forecast the future and that Allah always answered his requests and protected him from assassins.

Such palpable miracles were narrated in many prophetic Traditions. Most of them are categorized as *Mashhur*,<sup>1</sup> and the rest are

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.2144.

*Mutawatir*<sup>2</sup> Traditions serve to confirm the truthfulness of the Prophet (peace be unto him).

We should believe that Allah endowed him with characteristics and manners that clearly marked his prophethood. This fact was intelligently interpreted in a poem by Hassan b. Thabit in which he said:

Had not he come with clear signs  
His wits would have been the sign.

Prophet Muhammad's manners were all taken from the Qur'an: he never lied to anyone in religious nor worldly matters, neither in days of paganism nor after the revelation; and he never disbelieved—had he done something of that sort, his enemies, who were many in number, would have spread it. Muhammad (peace be unto him) never ran away from an enemy even in the most difficult and alarming situation, like during the Battle of *Uhud* or *al-Ahzab* (The Confederates). He was so tender to his people that Allah asked him not to feel such profound remorse: <<*So destroy not yourself in sorrow for them.*>>(35:8) <<*It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He is anxious over you (to repent to Allah, and beg Him to pardon and forgive your sins, in order that you may enter Paradise and be saved from the punishment of the Hellfire), for the believer, he is full of pity kind, and merciful.*>>(9:128) He was very generous and hospitable. He preferred to lead a humble life with no savings. He was eloquent, patient, and forgiving. He never became angry except in regards to matters that angered Allah. He was modest with the believers. He

<sup>1</sup> The *Mashhur* is a tradition which is handed down by at least three reliable authorities, so as to make it impossible for any falsehood to creep into it.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

was a true worshipper of Allah and a fighter in His cause, putting all his trust in Him alone.

This was his manner throughout his life, and he never changed as long as he lived. He could not have been a pretender because a pretender could not have maintained the same manner all his life. This appears in the *ayah* that says: <<...*I am not an impostor.*>>

He had such perfect manners that they were not given to anyone else except those who Allah chose to protect from being sinners. Such manners were also considered a sign of his prophethood. This was the reason why wise people believed in him immediately and exclusively on the basis of knowing his perfect manners and style of living. For example, Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) knew that he was true and honest. So when he told her about the revelation he had received and complained to her saying:

I fear that something may happen to me. She answered: Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously, assist the deserving, and assist the ones deserving calamity—the afflicted ones.<sup>1</sup>

The same happened with Heraclius, the Roman king when the Prophet (peace be unto him) sent him an letter calling him to Islam. Heraclius asked to see all the Arabs in his kingdom—among them was Abu Sufyan, who was on a business trip in the Levant with some Quraish men. Heraclius, who was sitting with some Roman statesmen, started to ask them, through his interpreter, about the Prophet. The answers were definitely a proof to his truthfulness and that he was a Messenger sent from Allah. The following

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.3.

conversation between Heraclius and Abu Sufyan, as narrated by Al-Bukhari, a master narrator, in his *Sahih*, will be useful in this context as it presents evidence for the Prophet's impeccable manners and character as well as the magnificent miracles with which Allah supported him.

Al-Bukhari said: Abdullah ibn 'Abbas narrated (may Allah be pleased with them):

Abu Sufyan ibn Harb informed me that Heraclius had sent a messenger to him while he had been accompanying a caravan from the Quraish. They were merchants doing business in Sham (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan), at the time when Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) had a truce with Abu Sufyan and the Quraish infidels. Abu Sufyan and his companions went to Heraclius at 'Ilya (Jerusalem). Heraclius called them in the court and he had all the senior Roman dignitaries around him. He called for his translator who, translating Heraclius' question, said to them:

- Who among you is closely related to the man who claims to be a prophet?
- Abu Sufyan replied: I am the nearest relative to him (among the group).
- Heraclius: Bring him (Abu Sufyan) close to me and make his companions stand close behind him.

Heraclius told his translator to tell any companions that he wanted to put some questions to me regarding that man (the Prophet) and that if I told a lie they (my companions) should contradict me. Abu Sufyan added: By Allah! Had I not been ashamed of my companions labelling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about the Prophet (peace be unto him).

- The first question he asked me was: What is his family status among you?
  - I replied: He belongs to a good family among us.
  - He said: Has anyone else among you ever claimed the same (i.e. to be a prophet)?
  - I replied: No.
  - He asked: Was anybody amongst his ancestors a king?
  - I replied: No.
  - He asked: Do the nobles or the poor follow him?
  - I replied: The poor follow him.
  - He asked: Are his followers increasing or decreasing (day by day)?
  - I replied: They are increasing.
  - He asked: Does anyone among those who embrace his religion become displeased and renounce the religion afterwards?
  - I replied: No.
  - He said: Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be prophet)?
  - I replied: No.
  - He said: Does he ever betray or prove treacherous to his covenants?
  - I replied: No. We are at truce with him but we do not know what he will do in it.
- I could not find an opportunity to say anything against him except that word.
- He asked: Have you ever had a war with him?
  - I replied: Yes.
  - He said: What was the outcome of the battles?
  - I replied: Sometimes he was victorious and sometimes we.

- He said: What does he order you to do?
- I replied. He tells us to worship Allah alone and not to worship anything else besides Him and to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste, and to keep good relation with our kith and kin.

Heraclius asked the translator to convey to me the following.

- I asked you about his family and your reply was that he belonged to a very noble family. In fact all the Messengers came from noble families among their respective peoples. I questioned you whether anyone else among you claimed such a thing. Your reply was in the negative. If the answer had been in the affirmative I would have thought this man was following his predecessors. Then I asked you whether anyone of his ancestors were kings. Your reply was in the negative; if the answer had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man wanted to take back his ancestral kingdom. I further asked whether he was ever accused of telling lies before he said what he said, and your reply was in the negative. So I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about Allah. I then asked you whether the rich people follow him or the poor. You replied it was the poor who followed him, and in fact the poor are always the followers of the Messengers. Then I asked you whether his followers were increasing and you answered in the affirmative; in fact, this is the way of true faith till it is complete in all respects. I further asked you whether there was anyone, who after embracing his religion,

became displeased and disregarded his religion. Your reply was in the negative, and in fact this is (the sign) of true faith, when its light enters hearts and mixes with them completely. I asked you whether he had ever been betrayed. You replied in the negative and likewise the Messengers never betrayed. Then I asked you what he ordered you to do. You replied that he ordered you to worship Allah (and Allah alone) and not to worship anything along with him. He forbade you to worship idols and ordered you to pray, to speak the truth, and to be chaste. If what you have said is true, he will very soon occupy this place, which is underneath my feet (now). I knew it (from the scriptures), that he was going to appear, but I did not know that he would be from you. If I was sure that I could reach him, I would go immediately to meet him and if I were with him, I would certainly wash his feet.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.7.

## The Belief in Allah's Books (the Scriptures)

Believing in the Books Allah revealed to His Prophets and Messengers is one pillar of *imān*. Allah, Who revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad (peace be unto him) had revealed other books to other Messengers who came before him. There are Books mentioned in the Qur'an and Books that were not. The Books mentioned are:

1. The Torah, which was revealed to Moses (may peace be upon him). <<*Verily We did send down the Torah, therein was guidance and light, by it the Prophets who submitted themselves to the will of Allah (Muslims), judged the Jews. And the Rabbis and the priests (too judged the Jews by the Torah after those Prophets) for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto.*>> (5:44)
2. The Bible, which was revealed to Jesus (may peace be upon him). <<*We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Torah that had come before it, and a guidance and admonition for the pious.*>> (5:46)
3. David's Psalms, which were revealed to David (may peace be upon him).: <<*We have preferred some of the Prophets above the others, and to David We gave the Psalms.*>> (17:55)
4. The Scriptures, which were revealed to Moses and Abraham (may peace be upon them). <<*Or has he not been informed of what is in the Scripture of Moses; and Abraham, who fulfilled his pledge? That no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another, and that mankind shall have only what he has striven for; and that his striving shall soon be seen; then he*



*will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense; and to your Lord is the final return.>> (53:36 to 42) <<Prosperous is he who purifies himself, and glorifies the Name of his Lord and the prays. Yet you prefer this life while the hereafter is better and everlasting. Surely all this is written in the earlier scriptures of Abraham and Moses.>> (87:14 to 19)*

Allah did not refer to the other Scriptures revealed to the other Messengers, but He informed us that each Messenger was sent with a discriminating message to convey: *<<Mankind were one community and Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent the Scripture in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed.>> (2:213)* Therefore, we should believe in those anonymous Scriptures. At the same time we should not claim any book to be revealed from Allah unless it is cited specifically in the Qur'an.

It is incumbent upon Muslims to believe that the Scriptures came to guide people to what is right and to the Oneness of Allah as the only God, Lord of creation, and Possessor of divine names and attributes. If there existed in these messages something that contradicted these principles, it would indicate a man-made change or addition. *<<Verily, We did send down the Torah, therein was guidance and light.>> (5:44) <<We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him, and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Torah that had come before, as a guidance and admonition for the pious.>> (5:46)*

We should believe that the Qur'an is the last Book revealed from Allah the Most High, and that Allah distinguished it from the previous scriptures in the following manner:

1. It contains all the divine teachings. It also supported the ideas already established in the previous scriptures such as conceding the Oneness of Allah, and worshipping and obeying Him. The Qur'an is also a comprehensive Book for all the good deeds and good manners that were scattered in the previous scriptures. It also functions to expurgate whatever changes or corruption happened to earlier Scriptures: **<<And We have sent down to you the Book (Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and trustworthy in highness and a witness over it.>> (5:48)**

The Qur'an introduced a general comprehensive law (*sharia*) for all mankind which, if followed, provides consolation in both this life and the hereafter. This law invalidates all previous laws employed by earlier peoples as it contained final judgements to suit all times and places.

2. The Qur'an is the only divine Book which Allah promises to keep and preserve: **<<Verily! We: It is We Who have sent down the Qur'an, and We will guard it (from corruption).>> (15:9)** **<<Verily those who disbelieved in this reminder (i.e. the Qur'an) when it came to them (shall receive the punishment). And verily, it is an honourable respected Book. Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or from behind it (it is) sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise.>> (41:41-42)** This merit is related to another one. The Qur'an was revealed to reach the whole of humanity and not a certain people like the earlier Scriptures. Therefore, Allah preserves it from corruption at the hands of people in order to provide right guidance till the Day of Judgment.

The other Scriptures were directed to certain peoples. Each Scripture addressed a certain nation. This means that those Scriptures, though having the same fundamentals, contained

judgements and laws very particular to certain times and localities.  
<<*We have prescribed a law and a clear way.*>> (5:48)

This is why Allah did not guarantee to preserve them over the ages like the Qur'an, but informed us about the changes that occurred in them. As for the Jews and how they changed the Torah: <<*Do you (faithful believers) covet that they will believe in your religion in spite of the fact that a party of them (Jewish rabbis) used to hear the Word of Allah (Torah), then they used to change it knowingly after they understood it?*>> (2:75) <<*Among those who are Jews, there are some who displace words from (their) right places and say: 'We hear your word and disobey,' and 'Hear and let you hear nothing.'*>> (4:46) And as for the Christians and the way they distorted the Bible: *And from those who call themselves Christians; We took their covenant, but they have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them. So We planted amongst them enmity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection, and Allah will inform them of what they used to do. O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Now has come to you Our Messenger explaining to you much of that which you used to hide from the Scripture and passing over much. Indeed there has come to you from Allah a light and a plain Book (The Qur'an).*>> (5:14-15)

Among the heretic inventions that the Jews and Christians added to their religion is the assumption proposed by the Jews that Ezra is the son of the Almighty Allah and the assumption proposed by the Christians that Jesus is the son of Allah: <<*And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: Messiah is the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouths. They imitate the saying of the disbelievers of old. Curse be on them, how they are deluded from the truth.*>> (9:30) The Qur'an corrected these

intentional errors by stressing the fact that Allah was too exalted to have had a son: **<<Say: He is Allah, the One and Only-The Eternal Cause of all being. He begets not, not was begotten. And there is none comparable to Him.>> (112:all)**

The Qur'an also stated that all Messengers were human, qualified with certain characteristics to be able to receive revelation and convey it to people. Allah said in the Qur'an addressing His Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him): **<<Say: I am only a man like you. It has been inspired to me that your God is one God.>> (18:110)**

Another change made by the Christians in their religion was, as Allah stated in the Qur'an, concerning the concept of prophethood. Some regarded Jesus, son of Mary, as a god, others assumed the concept of trinity. **<<Surely they have disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary.>> (5:72) << Surely they have disbelieved who say: Allah is the third in a trinity. For there is no god except Allah>> (5:73)** The Qur'an referred to their heresy and illuminated the true fact about Jesus and his mother: **<<The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that have passed away before him. His mother was righteous. They both ate food. Behold! How We make Our Signs clear to them, and again behold! How they are perverted.>> (5:75)**

It is irrefutable that the Qur'an is the only Book today worthy of belonging to the Creator. Such a fact can be supported by evidences other than the distortions that occurred in the other Books.

Among such evidences:

- 1 The original copies of the Scriptures revealed before the Qur'an have been lost, and what people have now are but translations. Whereas contrarily, the Qur'an is still preserved with its *surahs*, *ayahs*, and grammatical inflections in the same way the Angel Gabriel recited them to Muhammad (peace be unto him), and he, in turn, recited them to his companions (may Allah be pleased with them).<sup>1</sup>
  
- 2 The other Scriptures are a mixture of Allah's words and man's words, which contain interpretations, history, the stories of the prophets and their disciples, and the deductions made by scholars. No one can distinguish Allah's words from those of the people's. The Qur'an is entirely the word of Allah; it does not include what the Prophet (peace be unto him) or the companions said.<sup>2</sup> Abdul Wafa Ali Ibn 'Uqeil said:  

If you want to be sure that the Qur'an is not the Prophet's words but words revealed to him, compare it to the Prophet's words and observe the difference between the two styles. There will not be one word that resembles the words of the Qur'an. One of the miracles of Qur'an is that none of its verses were derived from any earlier text, although people used to quote from another; for example Al-Buhtury (a poet) was quoted by Al-Mutanabbi (another poet)<sup>3</sup>
  
3. Those Scriptures were not proven, by any reliable document, to belong to the Messenger. For example, the Scriptures of the Old Testament known as the Torah, were written down many centuries after the death of Moses (may peace be upon him).

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<sup>1</sup> Al Mawdudi, *The Principles of Islam*, p 77.

<sup>2</sup> Al Mawdudi, *The Principles of Islam*, p 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Knowing the Conditions of the Prophet*, vol.1, p 270.

Muhammad Farid Wagdy quoted from La Ross Encyclopaedia that:

After intense studies in archaeology, history, and ancient languages, modern science, and German criticism, it was proved that the Torah was not written by Moses (may peace be upon him), but by anonymous rabbis one after the other. They depended on some stories they had heard before Babylon was captured. Furthermore, some scholars affirmed that the five Scriptures were not all Israelite, they contained stories, symbols, and references.<sup>1</sup>

The Glorious Qur'an is the only Book decisively proved to belong to the Prophet on whom it was revealed, i.e. Muhammad (peace be unto him). This Book was passed down successively over the ages with its *surahs* and *ayahs* intact and in the order they were revealed. Unquestionably, the Qur'an we are reciting now is the Qur'an revealed by Allah to His noble Prophet.<sup>2</sup>

4. Another evidence for the changes taken place in those Scriptures is that they have various copies contradicting in their opinions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nadim al-Mullah, *The Islamic Beliefs*, p 57.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Mawdudi, *The Principles of Islam*, p 78.

<sup>3</sup> See Sayed Sabiq *The Islamic Beliefs*, p 168 in which he said:

It is sufficient to prove the changes that happened in the available Bibles today stem from the fact that there were four Bibles chosen from about seventy. These Bibles concerned the life of Jesus (may peace be upon him). Their authors are known and they have their names written on them. Some Christian critics have decided that the beliefs cited in those Bibles represent the opinions of Paul rather than the other disciples even nearest to Jesus. A copy of the Barnaba Bible was found in a prince's palace in Paris. It was translated into Arabic and printed by al-Manar Printing House. It is quite different from the other Bibles.

5. Another clear evidence the previous Scriptures were distorted is that of the corrupt beliefs and inaccurate images they contain about Allah, glorified be Him, and about His noble Messengers (may peace be upon them). In those Books Allah was likened to man, and the Prophets were described in a way incongruous with their honourable status and flawless characters.<sup>1</sup>

Having proved the distortion and the changes in the previous Books, we have to believe that they were originally revealed from Allah on His Messengers for the same purpose of the Qur'an, but we should not believe in their present contents except for what was referred to in the Qur'an. On the other hand, we should believe the Qur'an is the pure word of Allah and that it is the right Book and that all its words have been preserved. Therefore, all its commands should be followed, and all it forbids should be avoided; all its statements should be believed and all that contradicts it should be renounced.

<sup>1</sup> See Sayed Sabiq, *The Islamic Beliefs*, p 167, in which he gave examples for this in the Torah. Genesis, in the Bible, mentioned: The Lord said He was grieved because He created mankind. It was also said that Abraham was a liar. Lot committed fornication with his two daughters, Aaron invited the children of Israel to worship the calf, David committed fornication, and Solomon worshipped statues to satisfy his wife. Is there any more evidence for the distortion than this?

## Belief in the Day of Judgment

Belief in the Day of Judgment encompasses everything Allah stated in His Book and informed His Prophet (peace be unto him) about concerning what comes after death, i.e. like the grave and its comfort or torture, Resurrection, the assembling of scrolls, the account, the balance, the bridge (*as-siraat*), the cistern, intercession, Paradise and Hell, and what Allah prepared for the inhabitants thereof.

### The Day of Judgment in the Qur'an

The Qur'an contains many details of the Day of Judgment in different parts. Many Arabic stylistic devices are used to confirm it. One point of interest is the direct link the Qur'an makes between the practice of *iman* and the belief in the Day of Judgment. <<...but piety is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day...>> (2:177) <<...whoever believes in Allah and Last Day and does righteous deeds will have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor will they grieve.>> (2:62) <<This (instruction) is an admonition for him among you who believes in Allah and the Last Day.>> (2:232) <<Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day...>> (9:29) The Prophet Shu'aib said to his people: <<(O my people! Worship Allah, and hope for (the reward) the Last Day, and commit no mischief on earth...>>(29:36)

Allah indicates the seriousness of the Day of Judgment by the frequent reference to it. You hardly find a *surah* which does not refer to it in various ways. The Qur'an exposes the incidents of



that day in greater detail and frequency than any other matter of the unseen

A third point worth mentioning is the many names the Qur'an gives for that day; each one of these names expresses a characteristic feature of its horrors. Among these names:

- The Day of Judgment
- The Final Hour
- The Hereafter
- The Day of Requit
- The Day of Reckoning
- The Day of Decision
- The Day of Encounter
- The Day of Assembly
- The Day of Loss and Gain
- The Day of Eternal Life
- The Day of Calling
- The Day of Rising from the Dead
- The Day of Resurrection
- The Day of Distress
- The Day that is Ever Drawing Near
- The Overwhelming Disaster
- The Stunning Blast
- The Inevitable Day
- The Overwhelming Event
- The Inevitable Event

### **The Wisdom in the Clarity of this Concern**

Allah the Ever-reckoning provides detailed information to His servants regarding the Day of Judgment, Paradise, Hell, reward and

punishment so that we may not be deceived and led astray into disbelief. There is an enormous difference between the people who believe in Resurrection and Judgment, and those who do not. The rejecter of this belief is led by his own personal desires throughout his life and has no fear of the finality of the Judgment by Allah. The believer, on the other hand, fears and believes in the Day of Account for his deeds and words before Allah Most Just. He knows with certainty he will be rewarded for his good deeds and punished for the bad ones. The believer through knowledge and faith observes discipline within the limits of piety and righteousness knowing he will be rewarded. <<*And the weighing on that day (Day of Resurrection) will be the true (weighing). So as for those whose scale (of good deeds) will be heavy, they will be the successful (by entering Paradise). And as for those whose scale will be light, they are those who will lose their own selves (by entering Hell) because they denied and rejected Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.).* (7:8-9)

The way the Qur'an links good deeds and belief in the Day of Judgment substantiates the wisdom of generosity and piety. <<*Have you seen him who denies the Recompense? That is why he who repulses the orphan (harshly), and urges not the feeding of the poor...*>> (107:1 to 3) <<*The Mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day...*>> (9:18) <<*Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day would not ask your leave to be exempted from fighting with their properties and their lives, and Allah is the All-Knower of the pious. It is only those who believe not in Allah and the Last Day and whose hearts in doubt that ask your leave (to be exempted from jihad). So in their doubts they waver.*>> (9:44-45) <<*You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day,*

*making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred.>> (58:22) <<Certainly, there has been in them an excellent example for you to follow,—for those who look forward to (the Meeting with) Allah—(for the reward from Him) and the Last Day.>> (60:6) <<That will be an admonition given to him who believes in Allah and the Last Day.>> (65:2) <<Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in (the Qur'an), and they are constant in guarding their prayers.>> (6:92)*

It is human nature that man cares for his own interests. This is why the Qur'an makes excessive reference to the Day of Judgment to strengthen the spiritual nature. The wisdom behind this over-concern and frequent reference to the next life is that people tend to be forgetful and tend to be attached to their worldly gains, therefore, remembering that day and its subsequent comfort or torture may help to contain or minimize this attachment. People should realize that all their worldly gains amount to very little in comparison to the Hereafter. *<<(O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah you cling heavily to the earth? Are you pleased with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of life of this world as compared with the Hereafter.>> (9:38)*

The wisdom behind the repeated reference to the Last Day is also to reveal the attitude of those disbelievers who were, and still are, puzzled by the idea of Resurrection and that they will change into mere bones after they die. *<<Qaf. By the Glorious Qur'an. Nay, they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves. So the disbelievers say; This is a strange thing!*

*When we are dead and have become dust (shall we be resurrected)? That is a far return.>> (50:1 to 3)*

The Qur'an showed them that their attitude was immature because our present life is full of examples of Resurrection but their hearts are blind to see.

### **The Necessity of Belief in the Day of Judgment and Refutation of Misconceptions**

Believing in the Day of Judgment is indicated in both the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. It can easily be grasped by the sound human mind and the unadulterated *fitra* or nature. Allah cited many evidences to prove it in His Books and clearly refuted all misconceptions raised by those who deny it in many of its parts. Allah also gave a detailed description for the Day that was more illuminating than any other description appearing in any earlier book. All the prophets Allah sent came to give both good tidings and warnings of that Great Day, and they announced that anyone denying it was not of the believers. <<Allah! There is no god but He. Surely, He will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt. And who is truer in statement than Allah? (4:87) <<It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east and west (in prayers); but righteousness is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day...>> (2:177) <<(O you who believe! Believe in Allah, and His Messenger, and the Book (the Qur'an which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before, and whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away.>> (4:136)

The Qur'an tells us about Noah (may peace be upon him), when he addressed his people: *<<And Allah has brought you forth from the (dust of) earth. Afterwards He will return you into it (the earth) again, and bring you forth (again on the Day of Resurrection)?>>* (71:17-18) And the words of Abraham (may peace be upon him) in this context are: *<<And Who, I hope will forgive me my faults on the Day of Recompense.>>* (26:82) Allah also said to Moses (may peace be upon him): *<<Verily, the Hour is coming—and My Will is to keep it hidden—that every person may be rewarded for that which he strives. Therefore, let not the one who believes not therein, but follows his own lusts, divert you therefrom, lest you perish.>>* (20:15-16)

Moreover, Allah commanded His Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) to swear that the Resurrection is surely going to happen: *<<The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected (for the Account). Say (O Muhammad): Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will be informed of (and recompensed for) what you did, and that is easy for Allah.>>* (64:7)

When one denies the Resurrection, one actually denies what all prophets said, despite the absolute specific evidences that indicate the truthfulness of what they said. Thus denying what the prophets said is mere denial of innate sense motivated by stubbornness.

Those who deny the Resurrection do not have any proof for their opinion, because Resurrection is a part of the unseen, which no one knows about with certainty except Allah. The only way to prove or deny it is to know what God said about it. As it is only the Prophets that have received their knowledge from Allah, therefore,

they are considered the only true source for such matters, and what validates their truthfulness are the miracles and the ability to know the unseen that Allah empowered them to have

One of the misconceptions and arguments which have been raised is the return to life after turning to dust. Allah expressed the attitude of the incredulous saying <<*When we are dead and have become dust will we be resurrected? That is a far return.*>> (50:3) <<*And they say: It is only our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except time. And they have no knowledge of it, they only conjecture.*>> (45:24)

Allah the Exalted refuted this desultory misconception in many parts of the Holy Qur'an. He explained to the atheists that any human mind can easily grasp the idea of Resurrection as it is considered a natural phenomenon that has many parallel situations to it in this life. <<*And they say: When we are bones and fragments (destroyed), should we really be resurrected (to be) a new creation? Say (O Muhammad): Be you stones or iron, or some created thing that is yet greater (or harder) in your breasts (thoughts to be resurrected, even then you will be resurrected). Then they will say: Who shall bring us back (to life)? Say: He Who created you first! Then, they will shake their heads at you and say: When will that be? Say: Perhaps it is near! On the Day when He will call you, and you will answer (His Call) with (words of) His Praise and Obedience, and you will think that you have stayed (in this world) but a little while.*>> (17:49 to 52)

The misconceptions as raised in these verses are always one and the same, atheists think that it is too difficult for Allah to turn bones and ashes into new creations once again. Resurrection is thought to be too farfetched to be real. Such misconceptions are motivated by

this ignorance of the facts of life and death and of the absolute capabilities of Allah to create life out of nothing. Had those skeptics a clear view, they would have remembered the power of the Creator when He created them for the first time out of nothing—therefore remaining true to what He said about the return to life, punishment, and reward. Moreover, the issue is simple and self-evident. If man finds himself alive after he was nothing and then he dies, then there must be an absolute doer behind such major changes. And the absolute doer cannot be anyone but Allah.

If it had been anyone except Allah, he would have protected himself from death. So when the Creator talks about giving life to man after he dies, such a fact cannot be unequivocally denied. <<***Say: Allah gives you life, then causes you to die, then He will assemble you on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt. But most of mankind know not.***>> (45:26)

<<***And he puts forth for Us a parable, and forgets his own creation. He says: Who will give life to these bones when they have rotted away and become dust? Say (O Muhammad): He will give life to those Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation! He, Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! You kindle therewith. Is not He, Who created the heavens and earth Able to create the like of them? Yes, indeed! He is the All-Knowing Supreme Creator.***>> (36:78 to 81) The author of *Commentary on the Tahawiyah Creed* commented on these verses:

Allah the Almighty started the verses with an answer to a question asked by one atheist. The answer forgets His own creation. No one, however eloquent and knowledgeable he may be, can offer a better answer with such clarity and precision. The answer was sufficient to eliminate the misconception. When Allah wanted stress the

given proof He said: <<***He will give life to those Who created them for the first time!***>> Allah presented the first production of man as a proof to His capacity to make a second one. A wise person knows that had God been incapable of causing revival, He would have been unable, as well, to do it the first time. The next sentence in the verse <<***And He is the All-Knower of every creation!***>> indicates His knowledge of all the details concerning the first and second creation. If He is omniscient and omnipotent, how then will it be difficult for Him to revive bones after their decay? The next sentence is another clear proof. It is an answer to another question prepared by another atheist who asked when the bones had rotted away, will they turn into their former state of coolness and dryness. So how can they come back to life while life is of a moist and warm nature? The answer for this question was <<***He, Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! You kindle therewith.***>> In this example Allah elucidated how he could use this very cold and moist element, the trees, to generate very hot and dry ones for fire. Thus Allah Who can produce something from its opposite, and all creatures being subjected to Him, can do what the atheist denied. Afterward, Allah confirmed this fact by applying a much greater evidence, to prove his ability, on something minor, with the analogy being, as the one who is able to carry a ton would certainly be capable of carrying an ounce. <<***Is not He, Who created the heavens and earth Able to create the like of them?***>> The One Who created the skies and the earth, in their glory, magnificence, and magnitude of size, is necessarily able to revive some rotten bones.<sup>1</sup>

*The Commentary on the Tahawiyah Creed*, pp.460-461.



*<<O mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then verily! We have created you (i.e. Adam) from dust, then from a Nutfah (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge), then from a clot, then from a little lump of flesh, come formed and some unformed (miscarriage), that We may make clear to you(Our Power and ability). And We cause whom We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term, then We bring you out as infants, then (give you growth) that you may reach your age of full strength. And among you there is he who dies (young), and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down water (rain) on it, it is stirred (to life), it swells and puts forth every lovely kind (of growth). That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and it is He who gives life to the dead, and it is He Who is Able to do all things. And surely, the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it, and certainly, Allah will resurrect those who are in the graves.>> (22:5 to 7)*

Contemplating these verses from *surah al-Hajj* (the Pilgrimage) reveals more signs of Allah's capability to revive the dead. The proofs that they contain eliminate all possible doubts which those suspicious and stubborn-minded people may have, because:

1. They have irrefutable proof of the creation. and how all creatures were made from lifeless dust.

2. They bring into light some signs of Allah's power through the changing phases of man, from being a clot of blood, to being a little lump, then he is given eyes, ears, and other senses, bones, nerves, etc. Then He modelled this image in the perfect manner: *<<Verily, We created man of the best stature (mold).>> (95:4)*

Therefore, is not Allah able to revive him once more? It is only a process of changing from one condition to another. Those doubting can see examples of such processes in themselves and in others.

Sayed Qutb drew our attention to the hidden meaning in his commentary on the previous verse:

These phases of the embryo and then the new born baby prove that such planning and organizing will, definitely, lead man to his possible perfect stage but in a place where everything is perfect, because man cannot reach perfection on this earth but stops progressing at a time and then retreats. Thus there must be another place for him to become a whole.

These phases are of double significance. First, they signify Resurrection, and that the one who is able to create is able to repeat this process. Second, they reveal that organizing will work to develop man till he reaches wholeness in the hereafter, which also signifies the coming of the Resurrection.

Thus all the laws of creation, revival, life, Resurrection trial, and requital get connected in a way that manifests the undeniable existence of the Creator.<sup>1</sup>

There is another implication for the development of man that may attract the attention of the most stubborn atheists, the fact that every one of them used to be a drop of worthless liquid (sperm) and then he was changed into a clot of blood and then a lump (a shapeless piece of flesh). In all these phases, man was well-nigh a

<sup>1</sup> Sayid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, vol. 5, p 583.

dead creature. Gradually, Allah shaped and introduced life into this piece of flesh till it became a perfect man who can think, feel, quarrel, and dispute. This act of first birth is very similar to that of the second rebirth that is rejected.

3. In the previous verses there is a third proof for the Resurrection and the revival of the dead. When it rains on a wasteland, on which appears no sign of life, plants grow of different kinds, colours, tastes, and use, and life appears. *<<And among His Signs (in this), that you see the earth barren, but when We send down water (rain) to it, it is stirred to life and growth. Verily, He Who gives it life, surely, (He) is Able to give life to the dead (on the Day of Resurrection). Indeed! He is Able to do all things. (41:39)*

The Prophet (peace be unto him) was once asked how the dead get revived and what it looks like in this life. The Prophet (peace be unto him) replied:

Have you ever passed an arid and desolate valley?  
And have you ever seen the greenery tossing in it? This is how Allah revives the dead and this is the example given from creation.<sup>1</sup>

*<<Did you think that We had created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us?>> (23:115) <<Does man think that he will be left neglected without being punished or rewarded for the obligatory duties enjoined by his Lord on him?>> (75:36)* These two *ayahs* affirm that believing in Resurrection, judgement, and requital for the idea of Oneness of Allah in His names and attributes. Whoever denies it becomes an

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and Ibn Majah, *Tafseer Ibn Kathir*, vol.2, p 208.

atheist because he consequently denies Allah's wisdom, justice, and attributes.

This denial also indicates self-contempt on the part of man because he believes he was created absurdly and without wisdom and that his life on earth is temporal and limited to this very short time man lives and sins. This denial also means that man will be left without any reward; the oppressor will not be punished for his oppression, the just will not be rewarded for his justice, the reformer will not be compensated for the reforms he has made, the corrupt will not be punished for his corruption and the wrong doer will not be punished for his mischief.

Thus belief in Resurrection is conducive to the glory, justice, and wisdom of Allah. Any man of sight will admit it and any unadulterated instinct (*fitra*) will be comforted with its belief.

## **Details of the Day of Judgment**

Believing in the Day of Judgment requires believing in it in general, and this is the minimum degree of belief, and believing in all the unseen events that will happen after death that the Prophet of Allah (peace be unto him) informed us of.

### **The Trial of the Grave and the Questioning of the Two Angels**

We have to believe in what the Prophet (peace be unto him) said about the trial of the grave and the two angels questioning the dead about his God, religion, and prophet. The Prophet (peace be unto him) informed us in many sound Hadiths that people get tested in graves. Every man shall be asked about his lord, his religion, and his prophet. The believer will answer: 'My lord is Allah; my religion is Islam; and Muhammad (peace be unto him) is my prophet. While the doubtful will say they do not know and will receive the torment.

Among the various Hadiths which affirm the trial of the grave are those Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated on the authority of Asma' (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

Right now, at this place, I see what I have never seen before, regarding Paradise and Hell. No doubt it has been inspired to me that you will be put to trials in your grave and these trials will be like the trials of the Antichrist (*Messiah ad-Dajjal*) or almost like them. You will be asked what you know about this man Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him). Then the faithful believer will reply that he is

Muhammad, Allah's Messenger, who came to us with the clear evidence and guidance and so we accepted his teachings and followed him. And he will repeat it thrice. Then the angels will tell him to sleep in peace as we have come to know that you were a faithful believer. On the other hand a hypocrite or doubtful person will reply that he does not know but only heard the people saying something and so he said it too.<sup>1</sup>

Also Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

When a human being is laid in his grave and his companions turn away, he still hears their footsteps. Then, two angels come to him, sit him up, and ask him: What did you used to say about this man, Muhammad? If he is a believer, he will say: I testify that he is Allah's slave and His Messenger. Then it will be said to him: Look at your place in the Hellfire, Allah has changed for you a place in Paradise instead. Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) added: The dead person will see both his places. Qatada said: It was mentioned to us that his grave (the grave of the believer) expands to seventy cubits and is full of verdure until the Day when they would be resurrected. But a non-believer or a hypocrite will say to the angels: I do not know but I used to say what the people said! It will be said to him: Neither did you know nor did you take the guidance (by following Qur'an), then he will be scourged with an iron hammer between his two ears and he will cry and that cry will be heard by whatever is near him except mankind and *jinn*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.76.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.674; and *Sahih Muslim*, no.6862.

There is also what Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated on the authority of Al-Bara' ibn Azib who reported Allah's Apostle (peace be unto him) as saying:

This verse **<<Allah grants steadfast those who believe with firm word>>** was revealed in connection with the torment of the grave. It will be said to him: Who is your Lord? And he will say: Allah is my Lord and Muhammad is my Apostle (peace be unto him) and that is (what is implied) by the words of Allah, the Exalted. **<<Allah keeps steadfast those who believe with firm word in this world and in the Hereafter.>>** (14:27)

## **The Torture and the Comfort of the Grave**

After we believe in the trial of the grave, we have to believe what the Messenger (peace be unto him) said about the torment and the comfort of the grave. We have many evidences for it in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. **<<So Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted (against him), while an evil torment encompassed Pharaoh's people. The Fire; they are exposed to it, the morning and afternoon, and on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels): Cause the Pharaoh's people to enter the severest torment!>>** (40:45-46) In this verse, Allah threatened the Pharaoh's folk with the two kinds of torture. The first is referred to by saying: **<< The Fire; they are exposed to it , the morning and afternoon.>>** The second is referred to as: **<< Cause the Pharaoh's people to enter the severest torment!>>** The two kinds of torture are joined together with the conjunction 'and'. This means that they are different, i.e. the first kind is not the same as the second kind. If the second kind of torture happens

after the Doomsday, the first must happen between death and Resurrection, namely in the grave.

Allah, the Exalted pointed the type of torture that happens after death: <<*And if you could but see when the wrong-doers are in the agonies of death, while the angels are stretching forth their hands (saying): Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation because of what you used to utter against Allah other than the truth. And you used to reject His signs with disrespect.*>> (6:93)

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) explained this verse saying that this stretching and hitting happened at death, when angels hit them in the faces and the backs. Ibn Hajar also said the this kind of torture is confirmed by these words: <<*Then how (will it be) when the angels will take their souls at death, smiting their faces and their backs.*>> (47:27)

Ibn Hajar added:

This happens before the burial, but it is one type of torture meted out before the Day of Judgment. It is considered to be part of the torture of the grave because most of it happens in the grave.<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of sound Hadiths that affirm the torment of the grave. An-Nawawy said in his *Commentary on Sahih Muslim*:

You have to know that the disposition adopted by *Ahlul-Sunnah* confirms that the torment happens in the grave. This fact is supported by many proofs in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. <<*The Fire; they are exposed to it, the morning and afternoon.*>> And also it was stated in many

<sup>1</sup> *Fath al-Bari*, vol.3, p 180.



sound Hadiths which the Companions of the Prophet narrated of him. Moreover, it can easily be grasped by the human mind that Allah brings a dead body to life in order to torture it, but if it is not grasped by the mind, it should be believed in as part of the religion.<sup>1</sup>

Imam Muslim narrated many Hadiths to prove the torture of the grave, how the Prophet (peace be unto him) heard those being tortured there, how the dead could hear the footsteps of the people who buried them, when the Prophet (peace be unto him) told the people of the Well (*Qalib*) that they did not hear better than them (those in the grave) but they could not reply, how the grave of the believer expands in width, how the dead see their seats in Hell and in Paradise, etc.

Among those Hadiths which Muslims narrated on the authority of Zaid ibn Thabet (may Allah be pleased with him) was that:

The Prophet (peace be unto him) was going along with us towards the dwellings of Bani an-Najjar, riding upon his pony. It shied and he was about to fall. He found four, five, or six graves there. He asked who knew about the ones lying in the graves. A person claimed to know and the Prophet (peace be unto him) asked: In what state did they die? The man said: They died as polytheists. He said: These people are passing through the ordeal of the grave. If it were not for the reason that would stop burying (your dead) in graves on listening to the torment in the grave which I am listening to, I would have made you hear it. Then turning his face towards us, he said: Seek refuge in Allah against the torment of Hell. They said: We seek refuge in Allah against the torment of the grave. He said:

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Commentary on Sahih Muslim*, vol.17, p 200-201.

Seek refuge in Allah against the turmoil, its visible and invisible (aspects), and they said: We seek refuge in Allah against the turmoil and its visible and invisible aspects. And then the Prophet (peace be unto him) said: Seek refuge in Allah against the turmoil of the Antichrist (*the Messiah ad-Dajjal*). And they said: We seek refuge in Allah against the turmoil and the *Dajjal*.<sup>1</sup>

It was also narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, and others on the authority of Ibn Abbas:

Once the Prophet (peace be unto him), while passing through two of the graveyards, heard the voices of two persons who were being tortured in their graves. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said: These two persons are being tortured not for a major sin to avoid. He (peace be unto him) added: One of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine, while the other used to go about with calumnies.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Bukhari and Muslim also narrated that Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Apostle (peace be unto him) said:

When a person dies, he is shown his seat (in the Hereafter) morning and evening. If he is among the dwellers of Paradise, (he is shown his seat) from among the dwellers of Paradise, and if he is one from among the inmates of Hell (he is shown his seat) from among the inmates of Hell, and it would be said to him: That is your seat until Allah raises you on the Day of Resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6859.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.164.

<sup>3</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6857.

The manner in which this torture and pleasure happen and the way the soul returns to the dead are matters which we should not add to what the Prophet (peace be unto him) said about it.

The author of *The Commentary on the Tahawiyah Creed* said:

News has reached us from the Prophet (peace be unto him) of the torture and the pleasure of the grave and the questioning of the two angels. We have to believe in them. We never discuss the way they happen because the mind cannot conceive something that it never experiences in this world. Religion does not always present material that is familiar to the human mind; on the contrary, its ambiguous elements are often brought forth. The return of the soul to the body, for example, will not happen in the familiar way, with a parallel in this life, but in a rather unfamiliar one.

We should know that the torture of the grave is the torture of the life of Partition (*Barzakh*). Everyone who dies and deserves to be tortured will be tortured whether he is in a grave or not. He might have been devoured by a lion, burnt to ashes, blown apart in an explosion, or drowned in the sea. In all these cases, his soul will return to his body and will be tortured the same way as those in graves. As for what the Prophet (peace be unto him) mentioned about seating the dead and squeezing his ribs, it should be understood without exaggeration or sarcasm. Thus his words should not be loaded with what he did not mean or the opposite.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Qayim added to this saying:

<sup>1</sup> *The Commentary on the Creed*, pp.451-452.

The trend adopted by the early Muslims (*Salaf*) and the *imams* of this nation (*ummah*) indicated that when man dies he either rests in peace and pleasure or he is tormented. This happens to both his body and soul. The soul remains in peace or torment after its departure from the body. Sometimes it comes in contact with the body where they are both recipients of this peace or torment. When the Judgment occurs, all souls return to their bodies and then rise from the graves to meet the Lord of the worlds. This fact of Resurrection is a matter of agreement among Muslims, Christians, and Jews.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Portents and Signs of the Hour (Day of Resurrection)**

We have to believe that the Hour is undoubtedly coming. No one knows its exact time except Allah, who concealed it even from the Prophets because no one should know how long life is. <<*They ask you about the Hour (Day of Resurrection); When will be its appointed time? Say: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (Alone). None can reveal its time but He. Heavy is its burden through the heavens and the earth. It will not come upon you except all of a sudden. They ask you if you have good knowledge of it. Say: the knowledge thereof is with Allah but most of mankind know not.*>> (7:187) We should especially believe in its portents and signs. We learnt from the Prophet (peace be unto him) that the Last Hour has minor portents, most of which are the signs of the people's corruption and the beginning of the turmoil happening among them, and there are also major portents.

<sup>1</sup> Sayid Sabiq, *The Islamic Beliefs*, p 237.

As for the minor portents, they were cited in the sound Hadiths, among them are the following:

1. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

I and the Hour are (close to each other) like this (and he, in order to explain) pointed (by joining) his forefinger and the middle finger.<sup>1</sup>

This Hadith suggests that sending the Prophet (peace be unto him) with the final Message was itself one of the signs of the Hour. It also suggests that there will be no other Prophet coming between Muhammad (peace be unto him) and the coming of the Hour which is coming near.

2. In the Hadith in which the angel Gabriel asked the Prophet (peace be unto him) about the signs of the Hour, the Prophet answered:

The one who is asked about it is not better informed than the inquirer. I, however, narrate some of its signs and these are: when the slave-girl gives birth to her master,<sup>2</sup> when the naked become the chiefs of the people, when the

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.7044.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hajar said that this sentence means sons and daughters will show more disobedience to the extent that the son treats his mother as if she were his slave. He will hit, insult, and exploit her. This is why the son is metaphorically called 'her master'. The word 'master' may also mean the one who educates and breeds. In this case, it will not be metaphoric, as it suggests the lop-sided situation and the corrupted condition that prevails today where one who should be brought up is in fact bringing himself up and this confusion is a sign of the Hour.

shepherds<sup>1</sup> of the black (camels) exalt themselves in buildings.<sup>2</sup>

3. Al-Bukhari narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that Allah's Messenger said:

The Hour will not be established until: two large groups fight each other whereupon there will be a great number of casualties on both sides and they will be following one and the same doctrine; about thirty liars (*dajjals*) will appear and each one of them will claim that he is Allah's Messenger; the religious knowledge will be taken away by the death of the scholars; earthquakes will increase in number; time will pass quickly; trials and afflictions (*al-fitna*) will appear; killing will increase; wealth will be in abundance, so abundant that a wealthy person will worry that no one will accept his charity and whenever he will present it to someone, that person (to whom it will be offered) will say he is not in need of it; the people will compete with one another in constructing high buildings; a man when passing the grave of someone would say: 'would that I were in his place'; and when the sun rises from the west and the people see it (rising from the west) they will all believe (embrace Islam), but that will be the time when: **<<No good will it do to a person to believe then, if he or she believed not before, nor earned good (by performing deeds of righteousness through his or her faith).>>** (6:158) And the Hour will come while two men are spreading a garment in front of them but they will not be

<sup>1</sup> Al-Qurtuby said that this means that the desert Bedouins will take over the land by force and become rich and only interested in constructing high buildings which is happening nowadays.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.1.

able to sell it, nor fold it up; and the Hour will come when a man has milked his she-camel and has taken away the milk but he will not be able to drink it; and the Hour will come before a man who is repairing a tank (for his livestock) is able to water his animals in it; and the Hour will come when a person has raised a morsel of food to his mouth but will not be able to eat it.<sup>1</sup>

4. Anas narrated that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

From among the portents of the Hour are the following: Religious knowledge will decrease (by the death of religious learned men); religious ignorance will prevail; there will be prevalence of open illegal sexual intercourse; wine will be drunk; and women will increase in number so much so that fifty women will be looked after by one man.<sup>2</sup>

5. Abu Huraira narrated that:

A Bedouin asked the Prophet (peace be unto him) when the Hour would take place. The Prophet said: When *al-amana* (the trust or moral responsibility, such as honesty) and all the duties which Allah has ordained are lost, then wait for the Hour. The Bedouin then said: How will that be lost? The Prophet (peace be unto him) said: When the power or authority falls into the hands of unfit persons, then wait for the Hour.<sup>3</sup>

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.2198.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, no.54.

The Last Hour would not come unless the Muslims fight against the Jews and the Muslims will pursue them until the Jews hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and a stone or tree would say: Muslim, or the servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me; come and kill him, but the Ghangad would not say it, for it is the tree of the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

There are sound Hadiths that refer to other portents that appear immediately before the Last Hour. They can be found in the books of sound Hadiths.

Also, there are major portents that were mentioned in the Prophetic Traditions. Ten of them were listed in the Hadith narrated by Hudhaifa ibn Usaid al-Ghifari who said that:

The Messenger of Allah came to us all of a sudden as we were (busy in discussion). He said: What are you discussing? They (the companions) said: We are discussing the Last Hour. Thereupon he said: It will not come until you see ten signs before it and he made mention of the smoke; the *Dajjal*; the beast; the rising of the sun from the west; the descent of Jesus, son of Mary (Allah be pleased with him); the Gog and Magog; and land-sliding in three places, one in the east, one in the west, and one in the Arabian peninsula at the end of which fire would burn forth from Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their assembly.<sup>2</sup>

In the next few pages the most important of these signs will be clarified by scholars, especially those of Hadith.

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6985.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 6931.



## **The Rising of the Sun from the West**

This sign is the first of the alterations Allah will make in the universe to signal the coming of the Hour. Allah Who is cable of making the sun rise from the east is capable of changing its direction because it is He Who has created and managed it.

Many Hadiths stated that this will be the first major portent to appear <sup>1</sup> Abdullah ibn Amr reported the Prophet (peace be unto him) as saying that:

The first sign would be the appearance of the sun from the west, the appearance of the beast before the people in the forenoon and which of the two happens first, the second one would follow immediately after that.<sup>2</sup>

As stated in the preceding Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, when such signs appear and all people see them, they will all believe, but then the belief of those who did not believe before they see the signs will be worthless. <<*The day that some of the Signs of your Lord do come, no good will it do to a person to believe then, if he*

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hajar commented on the order of the signs:

Most probably the appearance of the *Dajjal* will be the first major portent that signals the changing conditions on earth, and the last sign will be the death of Jesus. The rising of the sun from the west will be the first major potent that signals the changing conditions of the upper world, and the coming of the Hour will be the last. The appearance of the beast may occur on the day the sun rises from the west. On that day no repentance will be accepted, so the beast will come to distinguish the believers from the unbelievers. The first sign of the Last Hour will be the fire which will drive people to their assembly from the east to the west. (Fath al-Bari, vol. 2, pp.296-297)

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.7025.

*believed not before, nor earned good (by performing deeds of righteousness) through his Faith.>> (6:158)* Many commentators said that this *ayah* means that the unbeliever will not have his belief accepted after the sun rises from the west. The sinner also will not, at that time, have his repentance accepted. All those who did not do good deeds, even the believers, will not have any of the works accepted after the sun rises from the west.

### **The Appearance of the Beast**

Allah referred to this sign in the Qur'an: <<*And when the word (of torment) is fulfilled against them, We shall bring out from the earth a beast to them, which will speak to them because mankind believed not with certainty in Our Ayat (verses of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad).*>> (27:82) The beast was also mentioned in a lot of Hadiths, some of them are sound (*sahih*). It is not true that the beast was described. People with faith themselves should not be interested in knowing its description. It is sufficient for them to know from the Qur'an and the sound Hadith that the beast is one of the portents of the Last Hour. On that day, no repentance will be accepted and people will be in their states (of *iman* or *kufr*—faith or disbelief) when the beast appears to talk to them. It will differentiate between the believers and the infidels. People, at that time, will not be familiar with talking to animals, but Allah will enable them to do so. Only then, will people realize that it is a miracle which signals the coming of the Last Hour after they were in doubt concerning the signs of Allah and of the Day of Judgment.

## The Appearance of the *Dajjal*

The term *Dajjal* means the big liar. Lexically speaking, *dajjal* means covering; and he was so called because he covers righteousness with his wrong doings. Among the portents of the Last Hour will be the appearance of a man whom the Prophet (peace be unto him) called *Dajjal* because of his lies and tricks. He will assume godhead and will try to tempt people to break away from their religion. He will be supported by miracles and wonders, with the permission of Allah. Some people will be tempted while the believers will keep steadfast and will not be deceived by his tricks. Afterwards, Allah will order an end to the *Dajjal*'s ordeal and Jesus (may peace be upon him) will descend to kill him. An-Nawawy mentioned in his commentary of *Sahih Muslim* that the Hadiths which are narrated by Muslim and others mentioned about the story of the *Dajjal* are clear proofs to the people of the soundness that the *Dajjal* is a reality. He is a specific individual whom Allah will send to test the people. Allah will enable the *Dajjal* to do things which are only in His own power such as: reviving those whom he kills, causing the land to flower, having the treasures of the land subjected to him, ordering the sky to rain (and it will) and ordering the land to bear fruit (and it will). All these things will happen at his command (with the permission of Allah). Afterwards, Allah will take away his power and he will be unable to kill anybody till Jesus comes to kill him. This is the position adopted by *ahlul-sunnah* and all the scholars of Hadith and jurisprudence, although it has been denied by Khawarej, Juhmiyah, and some Mu'tazilites. Some said that the *Dajjal* is real, but the miracles will be mere illusions and that if the former conclusion had been true, he would not have been supported by the miracles of the Prophets. This opinion is definitely wrong because the *Dajjal* will not assume prophethood, he will claim divinity. At the same time, his appearance will confirm his falsehood. He is unable to mend the

damage of his eye or to remove the token of disbelief which is written between his eyes. This is why no one will be tempted by him except the foolhardy and the vagabonds who will follow him to escape poverty or to escape his harms. His amazing wonders and swiftness of movement will not give the foolish any time to discover his defects and they will believe in him. For this reason, all the Prophets warned their peoples against his temptation and focused attention on the signs of imperfection so that they would not be deceived by him.<sup>1</sup>

The following are some Hadith concerning the turmoil of the *Dajjal*:

1. Ibn Umar reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) mentioned the *Dajjal* in the presence of the people and said:

There has not been a Prophet who has not warned the *ummah* (nation) of that one-eyed liar; behold, he is one-eyed and your Lord is not one-eyed.<sup>2</sup>

2. Hudhaifa ibn al-Yamman said:

I know more than you as to what there will be along with the *Dajjal*. There will be two canals (one flowing with water) and the other one (having) fire (within it), and what you will see as fire is water and what you will see as water is fire. So he who is among you who is able to see that and is desirous of water should drink out of that which he sees as fire. The *Dajjal* is blind in one eye and there is written between his eyes the word *kafir* which every Muslim will be able to read.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Commentary on Sahih Muslim*, vol.18, p 58-59.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.7005 and 7007.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, no.70113 and 7009.

3. Al-Nawwas ibn Sam'an reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) mentioned the *Dajjal* one day in the morning:

He sometimes described him as insignificant and sometimes described (his turmoil) as very significant (and we felt as if he were in the grove of date palms. When we went to him (the Prophet) in the evening and he read the (signs of fear) in our faces, he said: What is the matter with you? We said: Allah's Messenger, you made mention of the *Dajjal* in the morning (sometimes being described as insignificant and sometimes very important) until we began to think as if he were present in some (near) part of the cluster of date palm trees. Thereupon he said: I harbour fear in regard to you not many other things besides the *Dajjal*. If he comes forth while I am among you, I shall contend with him on your behalf, but if he comes forth while I am not among you, a man must contend on his own behalf and Allah would take care of every Muslim on my behalf (and safeguard him against his evil). He (the *Dajjal*) will be a young man with twisted receding hair, and a blind eye. I compare him to Abdul-'Uzza ibn Qattan. He who among you survives to see him should recite over him the opening verses of *surat al-Kahf* (18). He will appear between Syria and Iraq and will spread mischief right and left. O servants of Allah adhere (to the path of truth). We said: Allah's Messenger, how long would he stay on the earth? He said: For forty days, one like a year and one day like a month and one day like a week and the rest of the days would be like your days. We said: Allah's Messenger, would one day of prayer suffice for the prayers of a day equal to one year? Thereupon he said: No, but you must make an estimate of time (and observe your prayer). We said: Allah's Messenger, how quickly will he walk upon the earth? Thereupon he said: Like a cloud driven by the wind. He

will come to the people and invite them (to a wrong religion) and they will affirm their faith in him and respond to him. He will then give command to the sky and there would be rainfall upon the earth and it will grow crops. Then in the evening, pasturing animals will come to him with their humps very high, their udders full of milk, and their flanks stretched. He will then go to another people and invite them, but they will reject him and he will leave them and nothing would be left with them in the form of wealth. He will walk through the wasteland and say to it: Bring forth your treasures, and the treasures will come out and collect themselves and go to him like a swarm of bees. He will then call a person brimming with youth and strike him with the sword and cut him into two pieces and (make these pieces lie at a distance which is generally) between the archer and his target. He will then call (that young man) and he will come forward laughing with his face gleaming (with happiness) and it will be at this very time that Allah will send Jesus, son of Mary (may peace be upon him), and he will descend at the white minaret in the eastern side of Damascus wearing two garments lightly dyed with saffron and with his hands placed on the wings of two angels. When he lowers his head, there will fall beads of perspiration, and when he raises it up, beads like pearls would scatter from it. Every nonbeliever who will smell his odour will die and his breath will reach as far as he will be able to see. He will then search for him (the *Dajjal*) until he catches up with him, at the Gate of Ludd, and kill him...<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.7015.

All these Hadiths and others are considered proofs to the Muslims to believe in the appearance of the *Dajjal* as one of the major signs of the Hour.

If someone asks: How does Allah permit miracles to happen at his hand while they are only a privilege to prophets? In answer to this question Al-Khattaby said:

He comes to tempt the people and cause them turmoil. He already has signs of his being a liar, such as his being one-eyed and the token of disbelief, *kufir* written on his forehead. Had he been a god, he would have cleared his face from such signs. Thus he cannot be compared to a Prophet because the signs of the prophets are always perfect.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Hajar added:

There is a clear evidence for the *Dajjal* being a liar, before he calls people to take him for a god, he should first improve his own shape. The least of what may be said about him is: O you creator of skies and earth, would you make yourself in a better image and remove those defects from your face and eliminate what is written between your eyes?<sup>2</sup>

### **The Descent of Jesus (may peace be upon him)**

There is general agreement among this *ummah* (nation), besides its being indicated in *Summah*, that Jesus (may peace be upon him) will descend near the Last Hour and during the life of the *Dajjal*. He

<sup>1</sup> *Fath al-Bari*, vol.13, p 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

will kill him and rule by the religion of Islam. He will remain on earth as long as Allah permits. Then he will die and the Muslims will bury him and pray for him.

There are a large number of Hadiths in this context and it is the duty of every Muslim to believe in them and in what Allah said in the Qur'an—Jesus was not killed by the Jews but Allah took him up unto Him and that he will not die till he descends at the coming of the Last Hour. <<*And because of their saying (in boast): We killed Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah—but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Jesus was put over another man (and they killed that man), and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not (i.e. Jesus, son of Mary). But Allah raised him (Jesus) up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allah is Ever All-powerful, All-Wise.*>> (4:157-158)

In explanation of the two *ayahs*: <<*but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Jesus was put over another man*>> and <<*And there is none of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), but must believe in him (Jesus, son of Mary, as only a Messenger of Allah and a human being)...*>> (4:157-158)

Ibn Kathir said:

Ibn Jarir said: The first opinion, that all the people of the Book will believe in him after he descends and before he dies, is correct because the verse nullified the assumption propagated by the Jews that they killed and crucified him which some ignorant Christians believed. Allah said that it did not happen but only appeared to them to have



happened. They did not realize that they killed someone who looked like him and that Allah raised up Jesus to Him to stay alive and that he will come down before the Doomsday to kill the Antichrist, break the cross, kill the pig, and abolish *jiziah* ( a tax the non-Muslims pay in Muslim societies in return for receiving protection). Thus this *ayah* informed us that all the people of the book will believe in him without exception.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Hadiths that refer to the descent of Jesus:

Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said: By Him in Whose hand is my life, the son of Mary (may peace be upon him) will soon descend among you as a just judge. He will break the cross<sup>2</sup>, kill the swine, and abolish *jiziah*.<sup>3</sup> And wealth will pour forth<sup>4</sup> to such an extent no one will accept it, and one *sajdah* (prostration in prayer) will be better<sup>5</sup> than the whole of life.<sup>6</sup>

Again, Ayaad the judge said:

The descent of Jesus and the killing of the *Dajjal* are two facts accepted by Muslims. They do not contradict religion or reason, therefore we have to believe in them

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibn Kathir*, vol.1, p 577.

<sup>2</sup> By breaking the cross, Jesus means to nullify the lies of the Jews that he was crucified on a wooden cross. His aim is also to stop the Christians from idolising him.

<sup>3</sup> This does not mean to abrogate the Islamic law concerning the *jiziah* but it suggests that Jesus will only accept Islam from the people of the Book and thus (becoming Muslims) they will not pay the *jiziah*.

<sup>4</sup> Money will be excessive because of the justice and order Jesus will spread.

<sup>5</sup> People will not be as greedy for money as before, they will spend their time in worship

<sup>6</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.287.

under the assumption that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said: There will be no prophet after me. And Allah said: <<***And the Last Prophet***>>. And that the Muslim scholars agreed upon the fact that Muhammad (peace be unto him) is the last prophet and his religion is not to be abrogated till the Day of Judgment. In fact, this is a wrong deduction, because the descent of Jesus does not imply that he will abrogate the religion, but all the Hadiths indicate that he will be ruling by the Islamic *shari'ah* (law) that has been abandoned for so long.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Appearance of Gog and Magog**

This sign was mentioned in the Qur'an. <<***Then he followed (another) way. Until, when he reached between two mountains, he found, before (near) them (those two mountains), a people who scarcely understood a word. They said: O Dhul-Qarnain! Verily! Gog and Magog are doing great mischief in our land. Shall we then pay you a tribute in order that you might erect a barrier between us and them? He said: That (wealth, authority, and power) in which my Lord had established me is better (than your tribute). So help me with strength (of men), I will erect you and them a barrier. Give me pieces of (blocks) of iron. Then when he had filled up the gap between the two mountain cliffs, he said: Blow. Till when he had made it (red as ) fire, he said: Bring me molten copper to pour over it. So they (Gog and Magog) were made powerless to scale it or dig through it. (Dhul-Qarnain) said: This is a mercy form my Lord, but when the Promise of my Lord comes, He will level it down to the ground. And the Promise of my Lord is ever true.>>*** (18:92 to 98)

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Commentary on Sahih Muslim*, vol.18, pp.75-76.

*<<Until, when Gog and Magog are let loose (from their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every mound. And the true promise (Day of Resurrection) will draw near (of fulfillment). Then (when mankind is resurrected from their graves), you will see the eyes of the disbelievers fixedly stare in horror. (They will say): Woe to us! We were indeed heedless of this; nay, but we were wrong-doers.>> (21:96-97)<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> In his commentary on these *ayahs*, Sayed Qutb said that: We do not know for sure the exact place Dhul-Qarnain reached, that as the Qur'an pointed out as **<<between two mountains>>** or what these two mountains are exactly. All we know is that he reached an area between two natural or maybe artificial barriers where he found a backward people (a people who scarcely understood a word). Between the two mountains there was a passage. When those people found Dhul-Qarnain to be strong and pious, they asked him to build a barrier to prevent Gog and Magog from attacking them, from behind the mountains through the passage, and destroying everything in their land as they could not fight them. They offered him money in return for the job, but because he was pious and keen to fight corruption everywhere, he returned the money to them and volunteered to build the barrier. He thought that the easiest way of doing it was to fill up the gap or passage between the two cliffs, therefore he asked those backward people to help him physically and financially **<<so help me with strength (of men)>>**. They gathered for him pieces of iron which he piled in the gap between the two cliffs till the two cliffs levelled up with the gap and became like two shells surrounding the pile of iron. Then he ordered them to **<<blow>>** the fire **<<when he had made it (red) as fire>>** owing to the intense heat **<<bring me molten copper to pour over it>>**. He wanted to add the molten copper to the iron to increase its hardness. Such a method, which Allah guided Dhul-Qarnain to and recorded in his Holy Book, was discovered by modern science many centuries later. In this way the two barriers joined together blockading the way before Gog and Magog. **<<So they (Gog and Magog) were made powerless to scale it or dig through it.>>** Thus they were unable to attack the backward helpless people who were troubled. On looking at this huge structure, Dhul-Qarnain did not feel proud but he remembered and thanked Allah to whom he attributed this great work. Then he declared that all these

There are also Hadiths that verify such a portent:

Zainab bint Jahsh, the wife of Allah's Apostle (peace be unto him) reported that one day Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) came in a state of excitement with his face quite red, and he was saying: There is no god but Allah, there is a destruction in store for Arabia because of the turmoil which is near at hand as the barrier of Gog and Magog had been opened like it. He (in order to explain) made a ring with his thumb and forefinger. I said: Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him), will we be destroyed despite the fact that there will be pious people among us? He said: Yes, when the evil predominates.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, in the aforementioned Hadith narrated by An-Nawwas ibn Sam'an, the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

Allah will send Gog and Magog and they will swarm down from every slope. The first of them will pass the Lake of Tiberias and drink out of it, and when the last of them passes he will say: There was once water there.<sup>2</sup>

All those texts from the Qur'an and *Sunnah* confirm the appearance of the corrupt nation at the end of the world and they should be

mountains, barriers, and dams will be destroyed before the Day of Judgement so that the earth returns to an even surface. Sayed Qutb added: Who are Gog and Magog? Where are they now? And what has become of them? Those questions are too difficult to have answers because the only thing that we know about them is what was mentioned in the Qur'an and sound *Hadith*. The Qur'an mentions in this respect what Dhul-Qarnain said: **<<But when the promise of my Lord come to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true.>>** (*In the Shade of Qur'an*, vol. 5, pp.411 to 413.)

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6883.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.7015.

believed in. As for the time they will reappear and where they are before their reappearance, they are kept secret in Allah's knowledge.

## **The Beginning of the Day of Judgment**

Allah describes the beginning of the Day of Judgment in the two chapters (*surahs*) 'The Folding Up' and 'The Cleaving Asunder'. These chapters indicate that the Day of Judgment will start with a general, comprehensive change in the conditions of the universe. The heavens will split, the stars will scatter, the planets will collide, and the earth will disintegrate. The mountains will become heaps of sand which are flowing down. Everything which people know in the universe will be ruined. <<*On the Day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will be the heavens, and they (all creatures) will appear before Allah, the One, the Irresistible.*>> (14:48) This will happen after the first blowing of the Trumpet which Israhiel will do at the command of his Lord. Thereupon everything in the skies and on earth will die, except those that Allah does not want to die. <<*And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except him whom Allah will. Then it will blow a second time and behold, they will be standing, looking on (waiting).*>> (39:68) <<*Then when the Trumpet will be blown with one blowing (the first one), and the earth and the mountains will be removed from their places, and crushed with a single crushing. Then on that Day will the (Great) Event befall, and the heaven will split asunder, for that Day it will be frail and torn up*>> (69:13 to 16)

It was also narrated by Abu Huraira that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, will take in His grip the earth on the Day of Judgment and He will roll up the sky in His right hand and will say: I am the Lord, where are the sovereigns of the world?<sup>1</sup>

## Resurrection

After the second blowing of the Trumpet, and that life will return to the dead and man will return as body and soul as he used to be in life. Then people will come out of their graves alive and the hypocrites and nonbelievers will say: <<*Woe to us! Who has raised us up from our place of sleep*>> (36:52) Whereas the believers will say: <<*This is what the Most Beneficent (Allah) has promised, and the Messengers spoke truth!*>> (26:52)

It was mentioned in a sound Hadith that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) will be the first to come out of his grave. He said:

On the Day of Resurrection, all the people will fall unconscious, and I will be one of them but I will be the first to gain consciousness, and will see Moses standing and holding the sides of the Throne (of Allah). I will not know whether Moses has also fallen unconscious and gotten up before me, or Allah has exempted him from the stroke.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6703.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.1108.

## The Gathering

We have to believe that the Gathering will be after Resurrection: <<*The Day We shall gather the pious unto the Most Beneficent, like a delegate. And We shall drive the sinners to Hell, in a thirsty state.*>> (19:85-86)

The Gathering means that people will be driven to the location of assembly where they will stand waiting for Judgment. Allah will order His Angels to direct people to that place naked. Aisha reported that she heard Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him)saying:

The people will be gathered on the Day of Resurrection barefoot, naked and uncircumcised. I said: Allah's Messenger, will the male and the female be together on the Day and would they be looking at one another? Upon this Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said: Aisha, the matter will be too serious for them to look at one another.<sup>1</sup>

Again, Ibn Abbas narrated that :

While Allah's Messenger(peace be unto him) stood up to deliver a sermon, he said: O people, Allah will make you gather barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised (and then recited the words of the Qur'an): <<*As We created you for the first time, We shall create you again. (It is) a promise (binding) upon us. Lo! We shall carry it out.*>> (21:104) And the first person who will be clothed on the Day of Resurrection will be Abraham (peace be upon him) and behold! Some persons of my *Ummah* (nation) will be

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6844.

brought and taken to the left and I will say: My Lord, they are my companions, it will be said: You do not know what they did after you, and I will say, just as the pious servant (Jesus) said: <<*Never did I say to them aught except what You did command me to say: Worship Allah, my Lord and Your Lord. And I was a witness over them while I dwelt among them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness to all things.*>> (5:117-118) And it would be said to me: They constantly turned to their heels since you left.<sup>1</sup>

In such a difficult situation, all creatures will be in great distress. Al-Miqdad ibn Aswad reported:

I heard Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) as saying On the Day of Resurrection, the sun will draw so close to the people that there will be left only the distance of one mile. Sulaim ibn Amir said: By Allah, I do not know whether he meant by a mile, the mile of (material earth or instrument used for applying collyrium to the eye. (The Prophet is, however, reported to have said): The people will be submerged in their perspiration according to their deeds, some up to their knees, some to their waist, and some will have the bridle of perspiration and, while saying this, Allah's Apostle (peace be unto him) pointed his hand towards his mouth.<sup>2</sup>

In such a situation, there will be people placed in the shade of Allah as the Prophet (peace be unto him) said in the Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira and Abu Said (may Allah be pleased with them) that:

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6847

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6852.



Allah will give shade to seven on that Day when there will be no shade but His. (These seven persons are): a just ruler; a youth that has been brought up in the worship of Allah (i.e. worships Allah alone and sincerely from his childhood); a man whose heart is attached to the mosque (i.e. who offers the five compulsory prayers in the mosques); two persons who love each other only for Allah's sake and they meet and part in Allah's cause only; a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth for illegal sexual intercourse and says, I am afraid of Allah; a man who gives charitable gifts secretly such that his right hand does not know what his left hand has given; and a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes become flooded with tears.<sup>1</sup>

When the situation becomes harder and more distressing, people will seek the intercession of the Prophets and Messengers to rescue them and to make Allah hasten in judging them. Each Prophet will send them to the next one till they come to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) and he will intercede for them and Allah will accept his intercession and start judging people.<sup>2</sup>

## The Requital

We believe in the Requital of our deeds on the Day of Judgment, both the good and the bad deeds. <<*On that Day Allah will pay*

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.396.

<sup>2</sup> This is the great intercession which is favoured to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) among his brother Prophets. It is a matter of consent and agreement in the nation (*ummah*) because it was referred to in the sound *Hadith*. It is also what Allah referred to as <<...a **station of praise and glory...>> (17:79)**

*them the recompense of their deeds in full, and they will know that Allah,—He is the Manifest Truth.>> (24:25)* In this context, the words ‘the recompense of their deeds’ mean requital. <<*Whosoever brings good (Islamic Monotheism along with righteous deeds), he will have the better thereof, and whosoever brings evil then, those who do evil deeds will only be requited for what they used to do.>> (28:84)* The Prophet (peace be unto him) narrated that Allah said:

My servants, these deeds of yours which I am recording for you I shall reward you for them. So he who finds good should praise Allah, and he who does not, should blame no one but his own self.<sup>1</sup>

## **Presentation and Reckoning**

We have to believe that requital comes after a fair trial in which people will be presented before their Lord and proofs will be brought for and against them. People will look at the records of their deeds and read their books of account. Thus presentation and reckoning and reading the books of account are all matters of firm belief that are proved by the Qur'an, *Sunnah*, and the general consent of Muslim scholars.

Presentation was indicated in these verses in which Allah said: <<*Then on that Day shall the (Great) Event befall, and the heaven will split asunder, for that Day it (the heaven will be frail), and torn up, and the angels will be on its sides, and eight angels will, that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them. That Day shall you be brought to Judgment, not a secret of you will be hidden.>> (69:15 to 18)* <<*And they will be set before*

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Muslim, no.6246.

*your Lord in (lines as ) rows, (and Allah will say); Now indeed, you have come to Us as We created you the first time. Nay, but you thought that We had appointed no meeting for you.>>* (18:48 ) Therefore, every Muslim should hold fast to the belief that all people will be presented before their Lord and He will judge them by Himself without any mediation. It was narrated on the authority of ‘Addi ibn Hatim (may Allah be Pleased with him) that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) said:

And no doubt each one of you will stand in front of Allah and there will be neither a screen nor an interpreter between him and Allah. Then he will look to his right and he will see nothing but Hellfire and then he will look to his left and will see nothing but Hellfire. So let each one save himself from the Hellfire, even by giving a half a date of fruit (in charity). And if you do not find half a date of fruit, then (you can do it through saying) a good or pleasant word to your Muslim brother.<sup>1</sup>

Presentation includes Allah’s examination of the deeds of the people in this worldly life and the exhibition to them of their sins. If one belongs to those rescued from punishment, he will be given his Book of Account in his right hand and Allah will not try him, and his sins will be forgiven. Moreover, Allah will take him to Paradise. But if one is a grievous sinner, he will be given his Book of Account from behind his back and will have a hard trial and reckoning concerning every little or large deed he made. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported Allah’s Apostle (peace be unto him) as saying:

Everyone who is reckoned thoroughly is undone. I said: Allah’s Messenger, has Allah not called (reckoning) an easy reckoning? Thereupon he said: It implies only

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.717.

presentation of (one's deeds to him), but if one is thoroughly examined at the time of reckoning, he is in fact undone.<sup>1</sup>

Examination in reckoning in this context implies severe questioning without leniency.

As to the time when people are given their Books of Account on that Day to read them, it should be believed in and whoever denies it will be considered a disbeliever. <<*And We have fastened every man's deeds to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open. (It will be said to him): Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against you on this Day.*>> (17:13-14) <<*O man! Verily, you are returning towards your Lord—with your deeds and actions (good or bad), a sure returning,—so you will meet (i.e. the results of your deeds which you did). Then, as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand, he will surely receive an easy reckoning. And will return to his family in joy! But whosoever is given his Record behind his back, he will invoke (his) destruction, and shall enter a blazing Fire, and made to taste its burning. Verily, he was among his people in joy! Verily, he thought he would never come back to Us! Verily, his Lord has been ever beholding him!*>> (84:6 to 15)

These Books of Account which people will read are the ones in which the angels had entered their deeds as previously mentioned in the section on the belief in angels. <<*But whosoever is given his Record behind his back, he will invoke (his) destruction, and shall enter a blazing Fire, and made to taste its burning.*>> (84:10 to 12) <<*This Our Record speaks about you with truth.*

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Muslim, no.6873.

*Verily, We were recording what you used to do.>>* (45:29) Thus everything those honourable servants of Allah write, the people will read on the Day of Judgment.

Reckoning means that Allah will inform people, before they leave the place of assembly, about their deeds, sayings, and beliefs, good or bad. Then He will give them their Books of Account to acknowledge them. *<<...then to their Lord is their return and He shall inform them of all that they used to do.>>* (6:108)

In this process of reckoning, people are different. There will be those who will get an easy reckoning. He will get his works exposed before him. Then Allah will show him his evil deeds secretly with no one else seeing them. Then Allah will forgive him and command him to be taken to Paradise. In contrast to this, another one will be thoroughly examined and when he asks to be excused, his request will be rejected and he will be among the losers. Hence, Allah will mandate a herald to announce his evil deeds publicly. Thus he will be disgraced among people. For this reason, a believer should reckon himself before he is reckoned and start doing what is right before it is too late. *<<And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We as Reckoners.>>* (21:47)

The Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

A servant's feet will not depart (the place of reckoning) till he is asked about how he spent his life, how he managed his deeds, how he earned and spent his money, and in what way he made use of his body.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih at-Tirmidhi* (with a commentary by Ibn Arabi), vol.9, p 253.

It was also indicated in many sound Hadiths that there will be some people from Muhammad's *ummah* who will be exempted from the process of Reckoning, and will go directly to Paradise. Imam Muslim narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

Seventy thousand persons of my *ummah* will enter Paradise without rendering an account.<sup>1</sup>

How this Reckoning happens we do not know except for what is cited in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* about it, no more and no less, and we should not inquire about any more than what is cited. We believe Allah the Exalted will remind every servant of what he did in life, good or bad. There will also be witnesses for the reckoning.<sup>2</sup> For example, the earth will witness for what happened on it: **<<So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom, will see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom, will see it.>> (99:7-8)**

It was also narrated that Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (peace be unto him) was reciting **<<on that Day she will declare all her tidings>>** and then said: Do you know what are its tidings? They (the Companions) said: Allah and His Messenger know best. He said: That it will witness what every servant of Allah (he or she) did on

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.418.

<sup>2</sup> Mahmoud Khattab al-Subky said in *The Pure Religion*:

There will be eleven witnesses for each sinner on the Day of Judgement: the tongue, the hands, the legs, the ears, the eyes, the skin, the earth, the day and the night, the honourable angels, and money. vol.1, p 105.

its surface. It will say: He did so and so on this and that day. This is (what is meant by ) its tidings.<sup>1</sup>

We also believe that during the reckoning there will be a testimony rendered by all the organs of the body: tongues, hands, legs, skin, etc., about what man did. Allah recorded part of a dialogue between the enemies of Allah and their organs: *<<And (remember) the Day that the enemies of Allah will be gathered to the Fire, so they will be collected there (the first and the last). Till, when they reach it (Hellfire), their hearing (Ears) and their eyes, and their skins will testify against them as to what they used to do. And they will say to their skins: 'Why do you testify against us?' They will say: 'Allah has caused us to speak, and He created you the first time, and to Him you are made to return.' And you have not been hiding against yourselves, lest your ears, and your eyes, and your skins testify against you, but you thought that Allah knew not much of what you were doing.>> (41:19 to 22)*

We also believe in what the Prophet (peace be unto him) told us about the Mercy of Allah on His believing servants at the time of reckoning, that He will not reckon him in public. Ibn Umar Narrated:

I heard Allah's Messenger saying: Allah will bring a believer near Him and shelter him with His screen and ask him: Did you commit any sins? He will answer: Yes, my Lord. Allah will keep on asking him till he reveals all his sins and thinks that he is ruined. Allah will say: I did screen your sins in the world and I forgive them for you today. And then he will be given the book (record) of his good deeds. Regarding nonbelievers and hypocrites (their evil

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<sup>1</sup> At-Tirmidhi, vol.9, p 253.

acts will be exposed publicly), and the witnesses will say: These are the ones who lied against their Lord, no doubt.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Cistern**

We have to believe in the Cistern the Prophet told us about. The Hadiths mentioning the Cistern, by which Allah favoured His Prophet and his *ummah* (nation), were narrated by more than thirty Companions.

The Prophet will be the first to come to it, and then his *ummah* will follow him. The nonbelievers and the sinners will not be allowed to reach it. Going to the Cistern will take place after the intense situation of reckoning. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

I shall go to the Cistern before you and he who comes will drink and he who drinks will never feel thirsty, and there will come to me people whom I will know and who will know me. Then there will be an intervention between me and them. Then (the Prophet) would say: They are my followers. And it would be said to me: You do not know what they did after you. And I will say to them: Woe to him who changes (his religion) after me.<sup>2</sup>

It was also narrated that Uqba ibn Amir reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) one day went out and he offered prayer over the martyrs of Uhud just as prayer is offered over the dead. He then came back and sat on the pulpit and said:

I shall be present there (at the Cistern) before you. I shall be your witness and, by Allah, I perceive as if I am

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.1114.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.5682.



seeing with my own eyes my Cistern at this very state and I have been given the keys of the earth and, by Allah, I am not afraid concerning you that you would associate anything (with Allah after me), but I am afraid that you would be vying with one another (for the possession of) the treasures of the earth.<sup>1</sup>

It was narrated as well by Asma' bint Abu Bakr:

I heard Allah's Apostle (peace be unto him) say in the company of his Companions: I will be on the Cistern waiting for those who will be coming to me, and I will say: My Lord, they are my followers and people of my *ummah*. And he would say: You do not know what they did after you; they had been constantly turning back on their heels (from their religion).<sup>2</sup>

We have to believe in what the Prophet (peace be unto him) said in its literal meaning, no more and no less. The commentator of *At-Tahawiyah Creed* said:

The summary of the description of the Cistern as cited in the Hadith is that it is a huge tank. It is supplied from the water of the River Kawther in Paradise. Such a river has water whiter than milk, colder than ice, sweeter than honey, and more fragrant than musk. It is very wide, its width equals its length, each of its angles covers the distance of one month's walk. It was narrated in some Hadiths that the more people drink from it, the wider and fuller it becomes. Grace be to Allah who is never incapable of doing anything.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.5688.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.5688.

<sup>3</sup> *The Commentary on the Tahawiyah Creed*, p 251.

It was also narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr who reported Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) as saying:

My Cistern (is so wide and broad that it requires) a month's journey (to go around it); its sides are equal, its water is whiter than milk, its odour is more fragrant than the fragrance of musk, and its jugs (placed around it) are like stars in the sky; and he who drinks from it would never feel thirsty after that.<sup>1</sup>

Sound Hadiths which mention the Cistern of the Prophet are many, and believing in them is part of the faith. Ayad the judge said:

The Hadiths of the Cistern are sound and believing in them is obligatory. It should be taken literally without interpretation. These Hadith are *mutawatir*<sup>2</sup> as they are narrated by many Companions such as Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As, Aisha, Um Salamah, Harethab ibn Wahb, Abu Dhar, Thouban, Anas, Jabir ibn Samrah, Abu Bakr, Zaid ibn Arqam, Abu Umamah, Abdullah ibn Zaid, Abu Barzah, Swaid ibn Hublah, Abdullah ibn al-Samabehy, Al-Bara' ibn Azzib, Asma' bint Abu Bakr, Khawlah bint Quais, and others. Fewer than this number of Companions can make the Hadiths *mutawatir*.

In some other Hadiths it was reported that each Prophet will have his own Cistern but our Prophet's will be the greatest, the sweetest, and have the largest number of those drinking from it.

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.5684.

<sup>2</sup> Authentic and handed down by many distinct narrators.

## The Balance

We have to believe in what Allah and His Messenger said about people's deeds being weighed by a balance, out of Allah's justice. <<*And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it. And Sufficient are We as Reckoners*>> (21:47) <<*And the weighing on the day (Day of Resurrection) will be the true (weighing). So as for those whose scale (of good deeds) will be heavy, they will be the successful (by entering Paradise). And as for those whose scale will be light, they are those who will lose their own selves (by entering Hell) because they denied and rejected Our signs.*>> (7:8-9) <<*Then as for him whose balance (of good deeds) will be heavy, he will live a pleasant life (in Paradise). But as for him whose balance (of good deeds) will be light, he will have his home in Hell.*>> (101:6 to 8) The Traditions indicated that it will be a true balance with two scales and that Allah will turn people's deeds into bodies with substance that can be weighed. The good deeds will be on one scale and the bad deeds on the other. Ibn Qayim said in his famous poem:

Don't you believe O men of sight,  
A scale will weigh the deeds of man!  
Sometimes heavy and sometimes light,  
As Allah mentioned in the Qur'an,  
'Tis not abstract but true and right,  
For believers with good faith.

The weighing comes after reckoning because it aims at determining the reward. There are some people who will be exempted such as the prophets, angels, and some others Allah will choose.

## **The Bridge (*as-Siraat*)**

After the reckoning and weighing, people will be dismissed from the location of the assembly to pass onto the *as-siraat*, which is a bridge situated across the Hellfire.

All people will pass over it; prophets believers, and nonbelievers, those who will be reckoned and those who will not. Those who used to follow the straight path in the worldly life will lead the straight path on that bridge. It was narrated in many Hadiths that all people will cross over it, and according to the amount of their good deeds their crossing will be easy. Some will pass as fast as falling stars, some as fast as the wind, and some as fast as the blink of an eye. As for those whose good deeds are few, they will stumble and hang on to the bridge by their hands while fire is touching them from both sides till they reach the end of it and say: Thanks be to God who rescued us after seeing the *as-siraat*, while others will not be rescued. In the next Hadith Abu Huraira reported:

The people said to the Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him): O Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection? The Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him) said: Do you find any difficulty in seeing the moon during the night when it is full? They said: Messenger of Allah, no. He (the Messenger) further said: Do you encounter any difficulty in seeing the sun, when there are no clouds over it? They said: Messenger of Allah, no. He (the Messenger) said: Verily, you will see him like this (as you see the sun and the moon). God will gather people on the Day of Resurrection and say, let every people follow what they worshipped. Those who worshipped the sun will follow the sun, and those who worshipped the moon will follow the moon, and those who worshipped devils will

follow the devils. This *ummah* (nation of Islam) alone would be left behind and there will be hypocrites too among it. Allah will then come to them in a form other than His own form, recognizable to them, and will say: I am your Lord. They will say: We take refuge with Allah from you. We will stay here till our Lord comes to us. And when our Lord comes, we will recognize him. Subsequently Allah will come to them in His own form, recognizable to them, and say: I am your Lord. They will say: You are our Lord. And they will follow Him, and a bridge will be set over Hell. I (the Prophet) and my *ummah* will be the first to pass over it; and none but the Messengers will speak on that Day, and the prayer of the Messengers on that Day will be: O Allah! Grant safety, grant safety. In Hell, there will be long spikes like thorns, like the thorns of Sa'dan, but no one knows their size exactly except Allah. These will seize people for their misdeeds. Some of them will escape (for their good deeds), and some will be punished for their deeds till they get salvation.<sup>1</sup>

This act of passing over the *as-siraat* was referred to in the Qur'an: **<<There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is with your Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished.>>** (19:71) The Prophet (peace be unto him) also said:

Allah willing, the people of the tree will never enter the (Hell) Fire. One among those who owed his allegiance under that tree, Hafsa said: Allah's Messenger, why not? He scolded her. Hafsa said: **<< There is not one of you but will pass over it.>>** (19:71) Thereupon Allah's Apostle (peace be unto him) said: Allah the Exalted and Glorious has said: **<<Then We shall see those who use to fear Allah**

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.36.

*and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the wrongdoers therein to their knees (in Hell).>> (19:72)<sup>1</sup>*

In this *Hadith*, the Prophet (peace be unto him) pointed out that passing over therefore does not necessarily mean entering it. Everyone passes over it but then the God-fearing will be rescued whereas the nonbelievers will fall in it. When the believers pass over the bridge, they will stand on another arched bridge between Paradise and Hell.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudari narrated:

Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said: When the believers pass safely over the bridge across Hell, they will be stopped at an arched bridge in between Hell and Paradise where they will retaliate each other for the injustices done among them in this world, and when they are purified of all their sins, they will be admitted into Paradise. By Him in Whose hands the life of Muhammad is, everybody will (recognize) his dwelling in Paradise better than he recognizes his dwelling in this world.<sup>2</sup>

## **Paradise and Hell**

Included in this, we must believe in the real existence of Paradise and Hell and that they are prepared by Allah for the reward or punishment of His creatures. We have to understand that they were both created before the other creatures, and that they still exist and will exist forever. *<<O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whose fuel is men and*

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6090.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, no.113.

*stones, over which are appointed angels stern and severe...>>* (66:6) *<<On the Day when We will say to Hell: Are you filled? It will say: Are any more (to come)?>>* (50:30) Allah gave some information about what is in it: *<<Is that (Paradise) better entertainment or the horrible tree in Hell? Truly We have made it (as) a trail for the wrong-doers. Verily, it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell, the shoots of its fruit stalks are like the heads of devils; truly, they will eat thereof and fill their bellies therewith. Then on top of that they will be given boiling water to drink so that it becomes a mixture.>>* (37:62 to 67) The Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

The fire in which the sons of Adam burn is only one-seventieth a part of the Fire of Hell. His Companions said: By Allah, even ordinary fire would have been enough (to burn people). Thereupon he said: It is sixty-nine parts in excess of (the heat of) fire in this world, each of them being equivalent to their heat.<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet (peace be unto him) also described the lightest torture of Hell saying:

The least punished person of the people of Hell, on the Day of Resurrection will be the one under whose arch of the feet, two smouldering embers will be placed, which will cause his brain to boil.<sup>2</sup>

As for Paradise, it was recurrently mentioned in the Qur'an where Allah expounded in describing its bounties. *<<Verily! The pious will be in a place of Security. Among Gardens and Spring; dressed in fine silk and (also) in thick silk, facing each other, so (it will be), and We shall marry them to houris (female fair ones)*

<sup>1</sup> Sahih Muslim, no.6811.

<sup>2</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, no.2129.

*with wide, lovely eyes. They will call therein for every kind of fruit in peace and security; they will never taste death therein except the first death (of this world), and He will save them from the torment of the blazing Fire,—as a Bounty from your Lord! That will be the supreme success!>> (44:51 to 57) <<And Paradise will be brought near to the pious: not far off. (It will be said): This is what you were promised,—(it is) for those oft-returning (to Allah) in sincere repentance, and those who preserve their covenant with Allah. Who feared the Most Beneficent in the unseen, and brought a heart turned in repentance, enter you therein in peace and security; this is a Day of eternal life!>> (50:31 to 35) <<Verily, the pious will be in Gardens, and delight. Enjoying in that which their Lord has bestowed on them, and (the fact that) their Lord saved them from the torment of the blazing fire. Eat and drink with happiness because of what you used to do. They will recline on thrones arranged in ranks. And We shall marry them to houris (female fair ones) with wide lovely eyes. And those who believe and whose offspring follow them in Faith,—to them shall We join their offspring, and We shall not decrease the reward of their deeds in anything. Every person is a pledge for that which he has earned. And We shall provide them with fruit and meat, such as they desire. There they shall pass from hand to hand a (wine) cup, free from any evil talk between them, and free from sin. And there will go round boy-servants of theirs, to serve as if they were preserved pearls.>> (52:17 to 24) The Prophet (peace be unto him) narrated that Allah the Almighty said: <<I have prepared for My pious servants that which no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever perceived, but it is testified by the Book of Allah.>> He then*



recited: <<*No soul knows what comfort has been concealed from them, as a reward for what they did.*>><sup>1</sup>

We are to believe in this dialogue between the inhabitants of Hell and the inhabitants of Paradise as dramatized in *surat al-A'raf* (the Heights): <<*And the dwellers of Paradise will call out to the dwellers of the Fire (saying): We have indeed found true what our Lord had promised us; have you also found true, what your Lord promised? They will say: Yes. Then a crier will proclaim between them: The Curse of Allah is on the wrong-doers.*>> (7:44-45) <<*And the dwellers of the Fire will call to the dwellers of Paradise: Pour on us some water or anything that Allah has provided you with. They will say: Both (water and provision) Allah has forbidden to the disbelievers.*>> (7:50)

The immortality of the believers in Paradise and the immortality of the nonbelievers in Hell is a concept which was stressed in more than one place in the Qur'an. The Prophet himself said:

When the dwellers of Paradise go to Paradise and inmates of Hell go to Hell, death will be called and it will be placed between Paradise and Hell and then slaughtered and then an announcer will announce: O dwellers of Paradise, no death; O inmates of Hell, no death. And it will increase the delight of the residents of Paradise and it will increase the grief of the inmates of Hell.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no.6780.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, no.6830.

## **Faith in Allah's Predestination and Fate**

Faith in one's predestination is one of the cornerstones of the Islamic creed. It is the sixth pillar of faith in Allah. Whoever disbelieves in Allah's Predestination deviates from the Islamic Faith.

Umar stated that the Messenger of Allah said, when the angel Gabriel asked him about faith:

...to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgment, and to believe in predestination, its good and evil (aspects).<sup>1</sup>

### **Definition of Predestination and Fate**

Scholar's assertions concerning predestination and fate have differed. Some have defined them as identical, while others have defined them as different. It has been said predestination is Allah's knowledge of what His creations will be like in the future.<sup>2</sup> And fate is the availability of things through Allah according to His knowledge and His will.

Some scholars have reversed the definition, making the above definition of predestination for fate and vice versa, which is likely to happen.<sup>3</sup> Others gave one definition for the two terms, as the 'system decreed by Allah for existence and general laws, and the Traditions with which He associated the reasons with their

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<sup>1</sup> See *Sahih Muslim*.

<sup>2</sup> Hassan Ayub, *Simplifying Islamic Creeds*, p 77.

<sup>3</sup> At-Tabary, *The Cosmic Certainties*, p 147.

causation.<sup>1</sup> The verses of the Glorious Qur'an that mention fate refer to this particular meaning. This is clear when the Almighty says: *<<Allah knows what every female bears, and by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or exceed. Everything with Him is in (due) proportion.>> (13:8) <<And there is not a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in a known measure.>> (15:21) <<Verily, We have created all things with Divine Preordainment.>> (54:49)*

How significant the reply of Imam Ahmed was when he was asked about predestination:

Predestination is the potency of Allah the Merciful.

Ibn al-Qayim says in his proficient and pleasing poem:

The truth of predestination that has confused  
mortals,

Is the Merciful's power and treasure;

Ibn 'Aqueel culled from Ahmed,

What he recounted of heaven's pleasure.<sup>2</sup>

In truth, the definition of Ahmed, may Allah have mercy on him, is both competent and gratifying. Predestination means what God has decreed in His saying: *<<Then after the distress, He sent down security for you. Slumber overtook a party of you, while another party was thinking about themselves and thought wrongly of Allah—the thought of ignorance. They said: Have we any part in the affair? Say you: Indeed the affair belongs wholly to Allah. They hide within themselves what they dare not reveal to you, saying: If we had anything to do with the affair, none of us*

<sup>1</sup> Sayed Sabiq, *Islamic Creeds*, p 95.

<sup>2</sup> Interpretation of *Ibn al-Qayim's Poems*, vol.1, p 254.

would have been killed here. Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom certain death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death. But that Allah might test what is in your breasts; and to purify that which was in your hearts (sins), and Allah is All-Knower of what is in (your) breasts.>> (3:154) <<And to Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and to Him return all affairs (for decision). So worship Him and put your trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you (people) do.>> (11:123) <<So glorified be He and exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things, and to Him you shall be returned.>> (36:83) <<Surely, your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over the Throne, disposing the affair of all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His leave. That is Allah, your Lord; so worship Him. Then, will you not remember?>> (10:3) In addition to other verses that indicate that nothing takes place in the universe except by the will of Allah and His Own choice.

Moreover, belief in predestination (and fate) is based on believing in Allah's noble names and His attributes as possessing knowledge, capability, and power. <<He it is Who created for you all that is on earth. Then He rose over the heaven and made them seven heavens and He is the All-Knower of everything.>> (2:29) <<His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, it is He Who gives life and causes death; and He is Able to do all things.>> (57:2) <<He does what He intends (or wills).>> (85:16)

At-Tahawy reiterates that:

Everything happens according to His measure and His will. It is His will that is carried out, not that of the

worshippers, unless Allah intends it. If He wills so, it happens; and what He does not wish to happen, does not. None can prevent His ordinance, no final word except His and no vanquisher to His command.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Significance of Faith in Predestination**

Every Muslim should believe in predestination, its good and evil, its sweetness and bitterness. What is meant by believing in predestination is to believe in Allah's prior knowledge, His accomplished will, and His overwhelming power. In explaining that, Sheikh Al-Islam ibn Taymaha maintains that believing in predestination has two degrees and each includes two elements.

### **The First Degree:**

It is the belief that the Almighty God knew what His creations were going to do through His prior knowledge which is perpetually associated with Him. He knew all their circumstances of obedience and disobedience, of their allotment and their death. Then Allah wrote in the Book of Decrees the destinies of His creations, as the pen was one of the first thing created by Allah Who commanded it to write. It asked: What shall I write? <<***Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Verily, it is in the Book (al-Lauh al-Mahfuz). Verily! That is easy for Allah.>>*** (22:70) <<***No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the Book (al-Lauh al-Mahfuz) of Decrees—before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah.>>*** (57:22)

<sup>1</sup> At-Tahawiyah Creed, p 153.

### The Second Degree:

It is faith in the ultimate power of Allah and His comprehensive capability, which is to believe whatever Allah wills is going to be and whatever He does not wish, will never take place. It is to believe that no motion or stillness in heaven or on earth can occur without the Almighty's will. There can be nothing in His kingdom that He does not intend to be. The Almighty is able to bring into existence what He wills and keep nonexistent what He wills. There is no creature on earth or in heaven unless he is created by Allah, no creator but Him and no god but Him. He has commanded worshippers to obey Him and His Messengers, and He has forbidden them to disobey Him. He cherishes the pious, the bounteous, and the just. He is pleased with those who believe in Him, who do good deeds, and He dislikes disbelievers. He is not pleased with sinners and does not order people to commit sins. He does not like His slaves to be pagans, and He dislikes corruption of any kind. It is true that Allah's servants are doers of things and also that God is the Creator of their deeds. God's servants are the believer, the unbeliever, the righteous, the sinful, and the observers of prayer and fasting. God's servants have their own power and will over their deeds which are created by Him.

It can be concluded from Ibn Taymāya's words (may Allah have mercy on him) that faith in predestination includes four grades: the first grade is faith in Allah's prior knowledge, that is knowledge of His servant's deeds before they do them; the second grade is the writing that is in the Book of Decrees; the third grade is Allah's ultimate will and His comprehensive capability; and the fourth is the creation of all creatures from nothing by Allah Who is the Creator and all else being the created.

Predestination in respect to people and creation has two aspects, both good and evil. As to Almighty God, predestination is all good, for evil is not associated with God.<sup>1</sup> For Allah's knowledge, His will, His ordinance, and creation of things and events are all out of wisdom, justice, mercy, and goodness. Evil is not a component of the Almighty's attributes or deeds, nor has the Almighty associated Himself with any weak point or evil. He possesses absolute perfection and perfect grace.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is incorrect to associate evil by itself to Allah, but it is possible to include it generally. <<*Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian (Wakil) over all things.*>> (39:62) It is possible to be supplemented to the cause: <<*Say: I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of the day-break, from the evil of what He has created.*>> (113:1-2) It could be mentioned after omitting the doer of evil, as when the Almighty Allah recounts the *jinn*: <<*And we know not whether evil is intended for those on earth., or whether their Lord intends for them a Right Path.*>> (72:10)

The truth is that Allah has not created multidimensional pure evil, for the Almighty's wisdom declines that. Allah will not wish to create something that is all evil, and there is no interest in creating a certain form of evil. Allah has the power to create all good, but evil is not due to Him. Evil occurs but it is not assigned to Allah: whatever is assigned to Him will not be evil. It is a creation of Allah, but His will is not evil.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Taymaya, *Collected Fatwa*, vol.8, pp.94-95; *At-Tahawiyah Creed*, p 282; and *The Balmy Paradise (Ar-Rawda an-Nadeya)*, p 356.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Taymaya, *The Book of Good and Evil*, p 190; and *Elucidating the Dignified, the Commended (Tayseer al-Aziz, al-Hamid)*, p 625.

Disease, for instance, is an evil and a catastrophe to man when it happens, but it is benign in the end, and it is seen by God as good as He perceives what follows it, such as forgiveness of sins and purgation of souls. Likewise, imprisonment of believers by God's enemies is apparently evil for what it contains of pain and distress, but it is also a cleansing of spirits, purgation of lives, education of souls, in addition to the bounteous reward and general good. The creation of Satan (*Iblis*) has several apparent lessons, as repentance of humans after sinning, disclosing God's slaves, those who fight Satan and his party, who stand patient facing his temptation and seduction, seeking refuge and protection in Allah, escaping into His protecting corner.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Qayim al-Joziya mentioned several good reasons for the creation of the devil (*Iblis*):

- a) To make clear to worshippers the Almighty power in creating contrastive antithesis. The creation of the devil's soul, which is most wicked and the cause of all evil, is in contrast to the angel Gabriel's soul, which is the noblest, purest, and most redolent. It is the cause of all good. The Almighty's power is manifested as well in the creation of day and night; the disease and the cure; life and death; the beautiful and the ugly; and others that greatly manifest God's perfect and absolute power.
- b) To reveal the causes of Allah's strong and firm attributes, and the Vanquisher, the Avenger, the Strong Punisher, the Immediate Reckoner, Who shows great wrath, The One Who honours and Humiliates. All such attribute and deeds have to have what can be associated with them, and if the *jinn* and human beings were created as the angels, these attributes would not have existed.
- c) To reveal the effect of His attributes that include His meekness, His forgiveness, His pardon, His protection and overseeing His right, His setting free whoever He wishes of His slaves. Only for the creation of reasons that lead to reveal the effect of such names these wise reasons and benefits would have been useless.
- d) To reveal the cause and effect of His attributes about wisdom and experience. He glorifies and humiliates whoever He wishes, and He



So every evil act is a relative matter. It is good as far as Allah's work and formulation are concerned, but evil to the one who committed evil towards Allah. Therefore, evil acts have two faces: one is good and that is the one which is associated with the Almighty Creator in creation, in form, in the way it is created, and for what it has of ultimate wisdom known to Him alone. He lets whoever He wishes of His creation know what He wishes to reveal of it.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Anti-Islamic Protests Against Predestination**

Nonbelievers want to protest against Allah's predestination and His will, saying that if God did not will it so, they would not have fallen prey to it. Allah annulled and obliterated their pretexts and He says in the Glorious Qur'an <<*Those who took partners (in worship) with Allah will say: If Allah had will, we would not have taken partners (in worship) with Him, nor would our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything (against His Will). Likewise belied those who were before them, (they argued falsely with Allah's Messengers), till they tasted of Our Wrath. Say: Have you any knowledge (proof) that you can produce before us?*

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is the Most Knowing of who is likely to accept and thank Him for His beautiful creation.

- e) To manifest and bring to light all different kinds of servitude which would not have been revealed if the Devil was not created, as *jihad*, the mindfulness and love for Allah, detesting for the sake of Allah, commending what is good and forbidding what is evil, repentance to Allah, and returning to His path, disobeying Allah's enemies and asking Him to protect us, learning from the mistakes of others, warning of pride, and others. See *The Right Path*.

<sup>1</sup> The Balmy Paradise (*Ar-Rawda an-Nadeya*), p 356.

*Verily, you follow nothing but guess and you do nothing but lie. Say: With Allah is the perfect proof and argument, had He so willed, He would indeed have guided you all.>> (6:148-149)* This is Allah's answer to those who would protest by attributing to Him predestining their calamity. Allah has the ultimate knowledge and His answer for those who protest against predestination is too clear. It is based on two logical and accepted factors which cannot be denied by anyone except by those who prefer blindness to guidance and therefore deserve ruin. The two factors are considered as follows.

The first is that Almighty Allah let disbelievers taste His punishment and inflicted penalty upon them. If they had not chosen what they committed of crimes, sins, disbelief, and taking partners in worship, Allah would not have punished them because He is fair and does not prosecute anyone wrongly.

Moreover, the person who protests against Allah's predestination concerning his blasphemy and disobedience is either a believer in the existence of Allah or he denies it. If he is the former, he will adhere to the belief in Allah's justice and will not attribute any injustice to him, for injustice does not come from the Creator. Injustice denotes imperfection, and Allah can never have imperfect attributes. The punishment of a person who is forced to do something is unfair; and to protest against Allah's predestination or to disobey Him should be followed by Allah's penalty to the disobedient. If the protester against predestination denies the existence of Allah, his protest of predestination is a contradiction.

The second factor is that he who protests against predestination, while he disobeys Allah and disbelieves in Him falsely accuses Him without any certainty. How is it possible for the disbeliever or disobedient to protest that Allah had decreed blasphemy or

disobedience for him before he himself practiced that? The descent of Allah's fate is unknown except to the Almighty and the disbeliever is commanded to obey God and adhere to His orders before taking any steps to disobey Him. In other words, how could a man say he was predestined to steal, so he was therefore going to carry out God's predestination? Had he seen the Book of Decrees and read what is there to know what Allah has decreed for him, at a time he was commanded not to disobey Allah by stealing, etc.

With such impeccable reasoning Allah has answered those who use Allah's predestination as a pretext in other places in the Qur'an, as in the following verse. **<<And when they commit an evil deed, they say: We found our fathers doing it, and Allah has commanded it of us. Say: Nay, Allah never commands evil deeds. Do you say of Allah what you know not?>> (7:28)**

In fact, that the Qur'anic way of answering such people is to correct their way of thinking and conceptualizing to indicate that what is required of them is to fulfill His commands and avoid what He has forbidden. They are not required to seek His hidden divine secrets in order to accommodate themselves accordingly. Sayid Qutb (may Allah have mercy on him) says in the context of the verse of *al-An'am*, mentioned above.

The second step<sup>1</sup> was by correcting the way of thinking and conceiving things. Allah has given certain commands and forbidden us to do certain things. These are the affairs to be sure about. As to Allah's will it is something unknown which they cannot reach. Therefore, how could they know it? And if they are not sure about it, how can they allude to it? Allah has unequivocally given

<sup>1</sup> He means Allah's words: **<<Have you any knowledge (proof) that you can produce before us?>>**

commands and forbidden matters. therefore, why do they leave aside such known facts for unknown ones in an area they know nothing about?

The crucial point in this case is that Allah does not require people to know His unknown will and predestination in order to adapt themselves accordingly. but He requires them to follow His commands and avoid what is forbidden, reconciling themselves to it. When they attempt that, Allah guides them to it and they are filled with elation towards Islam. That is all that matters in this case, which appears then, in its practical form, to be plain and translucent, free from the mystery of the whole argument and its unyielding consequences. Allah is able, if He so wills, to create human beings innately guided to the right path, or to force them to follow His guidance, or to fill their hearts with guidance so they follow the right path without being forced to. However, Allah has not willed this. He has willed to allot human beings with the capability to follow or avoid guidance, to assist those who follow guidance to the right path and to sustain those who choose to avoid guidance in their transgression and blindness. Allah's will prevails.

The case then is very clear and is set in the most simple form comprehensible to human beings. As to the use of propaganda and argument, they are unusual for the Islamic sense and the Islamic way. In any philosophy or any theology, argument in this matter has not ended in a satisfactory manner since it is an argument that deals with the problem from the wrong angle

Furthermore, that faith (Islam) has come to realize a practical and factual way, defined by specific commands and prohibitions, therefore to assign people's actions to the unknown will of Allah is to involve ourselves and our minds in a maze devoid of any manifestation of truth. It is a waste of effort which could be more productively spent.<sup>1</sup>

Humanity and *jinn* are required first of all to obey Allah and never to disobey Him. Then, if you obey Allah and follow His commands, you should thank Him for guiding you to the right path. If you disobey, you are asked to repent and go back to the Almighty, to trust His judgement and His wisdom, and to detest disobedience and transgression to avoid succumbing to it. If you transgress, you should turn to Allah and ask for forgiveness. You have to know that your hatred of transgression is due to predestination, but you are required to detest what Allah detests and love what is loved by Him. You must comply with Allah in what pleases Him and what causes His displeasure. In addition, you must know that Allah dislikes blasphemy and does not accept it for His servants. Allah dislikes to be disobeyed and does not accept it from His servants. The Almighty has said: ***<<So worship what you like besides Him. Say: The losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, that will be a manifest loss!>> (39:15)***

### **The Mystery of Predestination and Aversion to It**

What the believer needs, then, regarding predestination and fate is to know its significance and grades, to believe in it, to believe that Allah is omniscient, the Creator of everything. What Allah does not

<sup>1</sup> Sayid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, vol.8, p 1227.

will is not created. He is fair and none is treated with injustice by Him. He has wisdom and does not trifle. That is all a believer has to know. What Allah knows we need is clarified for us, and what is hidden from us we should not seek to know. If we do, we will differ and be exhausted because our minds are limited. We are created by Allah to contribute in populating the earth, and therefore, should not be turned to discover the unknown which is known only to the Creator. All we have to do is to surrender to Allah and have faith in what Allah informs us of the unknown and the issues connected with it, as the relationship between Allah's creation of deeds and the human's will and his performance of such deeds.

This is not the sole issue of mystery that is incomprehensible to mankind. Allah's attributes are intuitively felt by us, but we cannot comprehend the way things are done. It is the same with the heavenly essence which is incomprehensible to human mentality.<sup>1</sup>

For that reason the Prophet (peace be unto him) has forbidden preoccupation with and probing deeply into the concept of predestination. On the authority of Amr ibn Shu'aib, Imam Ahmed recounted that:

The Prophet (peace be unto him) went out one day and found some people talking about predestination. His face turned scarlet red at once because he was furious, and he said: Why do you use the very words of the Qur'an to contradict Allah's words? For that your predecessors were destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hassan Ayub, *Simplifying the Islamic Creed*, p 84.

<sup>2</sup> *The Heavenly Conquest (Al-Fath ar-Rabbani)*, vol.1, p 142; *Ibn Majah's Book of Traditions (Sunnah Ibn Majah)*, vol.1, p 33.

A man came to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to ask about predestination. Ali said:

It is a dark road so do not take it. The man asked: Tell me about predestination. Ali said: A deep sea, do not delve into it. He asked: Tell me about predestination. Ali said: Allah's secret, do not burden yourself with it.<sup>1</sup>

How good is what is said by Imam At-Tahawy (may Allah have mercy on him):

The origin of predestination is the Almighty's secret of creation, unseen by any intimate sovereign or divine messenger. Delving into that matter is the road towards defeat, the ladder to what is prohibited, and a degree of tyranny. Beware! Beware of it in your looks, your thinking, or in your suspicions. Almighty God has veiled the knowledge of predestination from human beings, and forbidden them to seek it, as Allah says in the Qur'an: <<***He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned.***>> (21:23) So whoever asks why Allah does something, rejects the rules of the Qur'an, and he who does so is not a believer. That is all that is needed for the followers of Allah whose hearts are full of light. It is the degree of those whose knowledge is stable, because knowledge is of two kinds: that which exists in what is created, and that which is missing. Denial of existing knowledge is blasphemy, as much as pretension of the missing knowledge is blasphemy. Faith in Allah is confirmed by accepting existing knowledge and leaving aside missing knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Tayseer al-Aziz al-Hamid*, p 620; Sayid Sabiq, *Islamic Creeds ('Aqaed Islamia)*, p 99; Agry, *Islamic Law*, p 202.

<sup>2</sup> *At-Tahawiyah Creed*, pp.276, 292.

## **The Effect of the Tenet of Predestination on the Muslims**

This faith is established in the submission to Allah's wise judgement and His will. It is also built on not seeking the details concerning heavenly wisdom in either the commands or restrictions. The Messenger's Companions were like that, since the pillar of Islam cannot firmly stand except on the foundation of submission. The first step towards glorifying the matter is to trust it, then to have a strong and firm will to follow it, hasten to it, and seize the initiative.<sup>1</sup>

In this manner were the Companions noble. They were very courteous towards Allah and His Messenger (peace be unto him). Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said about them that:

I have never seen more gracious people than the Prophet's Companions. They only asked him about thirteen issues during his lifetime.

As to the case of predestination, the consensus of opinion of the Prophet's Companions, His disciples, and all followers of *Sunnah* is that everyone's records until the Day of Judgment are written in a major book.

On the authority of Ibn al-Dailmy that they said:

I met Abu ibn Ka'b and said to him: I fear predestination so tell me about it, may Allah pacify my heart. He answered him saying: If Almighty God tortured the people of Heaven and earth, he would do so without being unfair to them. If He showed mercy, His mercy would be finer than their deeds. If you spent a mountain of gold for God, He would not accept it until you believed in

<sup>1</sup> *At-Tahawiyah Creed*, p 91.



predestination and understand that what happened to you would not have missed. If you died, not believing in that, you would go to Hell. He said: I met Ibn Mas'ud who said the same thing, and I met Huzaifa who said the same. I met Zaid ibn Thabet who confirmed the same opinion on the authority of the Prophet (peace be unto him).<sup>1</sup>

On the authority of 'Ebada ibn as-Samet (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said to his son at the time of his death:

O my son, you will not get the taste of faith until you learn that what happened to you would not have missed you, and what missed you is not ordained to happen to you. I heard the Messenger of Allah say: The first thing created by God is the pen. God said: Write. And it asked: Almighty God what shall I write? Allah said: Write what is predestined for everything till the Day of Judgment. O my son, I heard Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) say: Whoever dies not believing in that, he is not of us.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, this tenet had a great impact on the Messenger's Companions. They set out everywhere on earth, believing the creed of predestination as taught to them by Allah's Prophet (peace be unto him). He said to Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with him):

<sup>1</sup> Transmitted by Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ahmed at-Tabrany, and Ibn Haban. On its authority, it is referred to by Sa'eed ibn Snan al-Shebany, Theqa ibn Mu'een, Ahmed, etc. See *Game' al-Fuaed min Game' al-Usul wa al-Magma' az-Zawaed*, vol.2, p 318; Al-Agry, *Book of the Law (Kitab ash-Shari'ah)*, p 203; and *Concise Volume of Traditions (Sahih al-Game' al-Sagheer)*, pp.57-58.

<sup>2</sup> Transmitted by Abu Dawud. See *Game' al-Fuaed*, vol.1, p 328; and Al-Agry, *Kitab al-Shari'ah*, p 211.

Young man, if you remember Allah, He remembers you. If you remember Him, you will find Him with you; if you ask, ask Allah; if you seek assistance, seek Allah's assistance. Know that if the whole community collaborated to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you except through what is preordained by Allah. And if they collaborated to harm you with something, they would not inflict harm except what is preordained. Pens and papers are dried.<sup>1</sup>

This creed filled their hearts with peace, overwhelmed their souls with tranquillity, and raised them to dignity. Thereupon, their nerves were calmed when they set out to transmit that faith to humanity. They belittled all the powers of the earth compared with their faith in Allah's ordinance. Salman al-Faresy was asked:

What is meant by people saying until you believe in the good and evil of predestination? He said: Until you believe in predestination means that what missed you would not have happened to you, and what happened would not have missed you.<sup>2</sup>

What bliss is endowed upon the soul by this creed! What courage filled the hearts of people who believed that everything is in the hands of Allah and that human beings do not possess such power. All the forces of the earth cannot but yield to any person who believes in such a principle and who is raised on such a faith. In this you find the true explanation for what was accomplished by that faith through the faithful handful of people who transmitted that faith: What they accomplished were like miracles, yet they are facts. The great achievements accomplished by Allah's Prophet (peace be

<sup>1</sup> See *Sahih Muslim*.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Agry, *Islamic Law*, p 206.

unto him) and his Companions was mainly the fruit of their belief in God, the Day of Judgment, and Allah's Predestination.

A person who is blessed by believing in predestination and knows that whatever happened to him would never have missed him, and that if the whole community collaborated to harm him they would never do so except what is ordained by God, and that no soul can pass away before concluding its life. Only that human being is able to free himself from servitude to other human beings by becoming a servant of Allah, for how could he bow to any other force on earth? He knows that everything is in the hands of the Creator of heaven and earth and all the creatures living there. How could he humiliate himself to a slave like him made of dust? Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy upon him) says:

Whoever realizes that every creature upon earth is made of earth could not let his obedience to someone created of earth precede or supersede his obedience to the Lord of creation. Or how could earth be pleased with the wrath and displeasure of the Bestower and Owner of the two worlds? This is astonishing!<sup>1</sup>

This tenet eliminates from the heart it resides in any sign of cowardice or fear, and urges the person to fight disbelievers and tyrants, not caring for what they might do at all. Why should he bother, when his Creator and theirs has secured his fortune and his age? Why should he be afraid, when he knows that what is predestined is certainly going to take place, and what is not, will never happen? This idea is exquisitely expressed by one poet:

On which day can I escape death:  
The day with or without predestination?

<sup>1</sup>- *The Compiler of Sciences and Rules (Game' al-'ulum wal-Hikam)*, p 385.

The day without predestination I fear not;  
But alas, what is predestined the cautious escapes not.

The person believing in Allah's predestination has another blessing, matchless to any of the world's blessings. It is the feeling of satisfaction in any condition. It is because that person sees all that is predestined occurs by Almighty Allah's command and according to His plan, and that events emerge according to God's wisdom and His will. Allah knows, while the people do not. <<*Jihad is ordained for you though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.*>> (2:216)

That believing soul learns that Allah who predestines good or evil is wise and merciful and so it will not react to a blessing with wantonness, nor will it feel panic at a time of calamity. This soul is thankful in good times, and composed and patient at the time of crisis. In all cases, the outcome is good for such a soul, and the chosen Messenger (peace be unto him) has said:

How wonderful for the believer! All his affairs are full of good, not for anyone, but only for the believer in Allah: if something good happens, he thanks Allah and he is rewarded for that; and if he suffers from some misfortune, he is patient, and he is rewarded for it.<sup>1</sup>

A true believer is one who regards the calamity and learns that it is Allah's predestination, so he is reassured and accepts it. He is too courteous to reject the way of his God and Creator. He considers the consequences of the misfortune and its share of recompense,

<sup>1</sup> Transmitted by Muslim and Ahmed. See *Reyad as-Saliheen*, vol.1, p 147.

and he patiently accepts it. In the two *Sahihs*, on the authority of the Prophet (peace be unto him) who said:

Those most tempted with misfortune are the Prophets, then the upright, and those next to them. A man is tested according to the degree of his faith, and if it is firm, the test is likewise; if it is tender, the test is likewise. Misfortune pursues him until he treads the earth without sin.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Qayim has expressed this beautifully when he said:

If a misfortune impedes your way, be patient,  
The patience of the Generous who shows more  
generosity;  
If you complain to Adam's issue,  
You complain of the Merciful to the ruthless.

And 'Alqama (may Allah have mercy on him) explains Allah's words: <<***No calamity befalls, but with the Leave of Allah, and whosoever believes in Allah He guides his heart, and Allah is the All-Knower of everything.***>> (64:11) when he says:

When a man is hit by a calamity and learns that it is sent by Allah, He examines his heart.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Abbas says in this context:

Allah guides his unwavering heart and he learns that what has afflicted him would not have missed him, and what missed him would not have hit him.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Agreed upon.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibn Katheer's Interpretation (Tafseer Ibn Katheer)*, vol.4, p 275.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

The spirits of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were uplifted and exalted, and their consciences were sharpened in the light of perception, based on faith, to the extent that they received good and evil in the same way. Likewise, their thanks and patience were equal. As Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

If patience and thanks were two camels, I would not care which one to ride.

Abu Muhammad al-Hariry says:

Patience does not differentiate between blessing and calamity when the mind is at ease in both cases.

Imam Ahmed was asked if a man who possessed a hundred thousand dinars would be an ascetic person and renounce worldly pleasure? He replied:

Yes, provided that he would not be delighted when it has increased, and would not be sad when it has decreased.

Some predecessors said:

The ascetic is the person whose lawful earning is not more than his thanks nor what is forbidden exceed his patience.<sup>1</sup>

Umar ibn al-Khattab wrote to Abu Musa al-Ash'ary (may Allah be pleased with them):

Well, all good consequences lie in accepting Allah's will. If you could accept and be satisfied, do so or be patient.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Such similar sayings are in *The Tools of Patience ('Eddat as-Sabereen)*, pp.90 and 206.

Ibn 'Ataa said:

Satisfaction is the heart's acquiescence to Allah's preordained choice and that He chose what is best for him.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, patience is required of us according to scholars. Above that is satisfaction with Allah's ordinance. It is said concerning this acceptance that it is a duty, and that it is preferred. There is a consensus by scholars that maintain its verdict is no less than preference.<sup>3</sup>

The basis of acceptance and satisfaction is faith in the Almighty's predestination, as mentioned previously, in addition to sensing Allah's mercy towards His worshippers. Abd al-Wahid ibn Zaid said:

Acceptance is the greatest door to God; it is the world's Eden and the worshippers' place of rest. Those who are satisfied (accept the will of Allah) notice how the person hit with misfortune is finally rewarded, and how God chooses the best for His tests and trials, and how He is just in His judgement. At other times they notice the reward of those who accept their fate and Allah's judgement which overcomes the pain of what is ordained. Sometimes they observe the greatness, grace, and perfection of the misfortune and are indulged in watching that till they forget

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ways of the Righteous (Madarej as-Salikeen)*, vol.2, p 177.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.2, p 175.

<sup>3</sup> *The Ways of the Righteous (Madarej as-Salikeen)*, vol.2, p 117; and *The Balmy Paradise (Ar-Rawda an-Nadeya)*, p 489.

their pain, or perhaps they find pleasure in it since it comes from the One they love.<sup>1</sup>

You have to know, dear reader, that acceptance of Allah's will, and patience, which are the fruit of faith in predestination, mean acceptance of what is predestined of calamities and catastrophes as well as patience in compliance with Almighty Allah; patience in keeping away from any transgression and away from other such deeds disliked by Allah.<sup>2</sup> It does not signify acceptance of blasphemy, disobedience, or sinning, nor does it refer to patience in humiliation or injustice, since Allah is not pleased with His servants' blasphemy, disobedience, or humiliation. Your satisfaction should follow what appeases Allah, and your patience should be in compliance with Allah and His way.

Acceptance of fate, patience in misfortune, and reassurance of Allah's judgement are the important foundations for psychological peace of mind. These are the most significant motives behind the drive of all human ability to work on this earth according to Allah's way; it is without cowardice, pause for self pity, or regret. There is also no place for the attitude of remorse; what Allah predestines and what He wills is done.

In this creed, there is only the heart's tranquillity; the comfort of the body, soul and nerves; and bidding goodbye to worry and sadness. There is no inner conflict, no nervous breakdowns, no abnormalities, no schizophrenia, but there is a sense of satisfaction, tranquillity, joy, comfort, and reassurance. In fact, faith in

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ways of the Righteous (Madarej as-Salikeen)*, vol.1, p 167; and *The Balmy Paradise (Ar-Rawda an-Nadeya)*, p 486; and *The Compiler of Knowledge and Rules*, p 170.

<sup>2</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.3, p 101.



predestination has great positive consequences in the life of people and on this earth.

As to the communities that have abandoned this creed and have dispensed with believing in Allah and in His planning of the affairs of life and the living, their lot in the second world will be in eternal humiliation and suffering. In this world, their lot is loss of happiness, torn nerves, exigency, and tension in life. This confirms what the Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an: *<<(Allah) said: Get you down (upon the earth), both of you, together (from Paradise), some of you are an enemy to some others. Then if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My Guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery. But whosoever turns from My Reminder verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.>> (20:123-124)*

### **Faith in Predestination Does Not Contradict the Rule of Cause and Effect**

We should always remember that we are commanded to believe in the rule of cause and effect, in addition to our submission to the Almighty Allah, trusting that He possesses everything. We trust the causes do not give the effect except through Allah's permission. The Creator who has created the causes is He who creates the consequences and the fruit. Whoever desires to have good progeny has to have a cause for that, which is a lawful marriage. But such a marriage may and may not bear its fruit, which is progeny, according to Allah's will: *<<To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills. Or He bestows both males and*

*females, and He renders barren whom He wills. Verily, He is the All-Knower and is Able to do all things.>> (42:49-50)* For that reason, the Muslim is forbidden to abandon the cause and effect. for if he seeks not his fortune he will be a sinner, though his fortune is in the hands of Allah.

Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) has indicated that the lawful causes spring from predestination. It was said to him:

Have you seen the Qur'anic recitation to counteract evil, a form of piety to protect us and medications to cure us? Do these cause any changes in Allah's' predestination? He said: They are owing to Allah's predestination.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, turning to causes and believing they are affected by the means is a form of polytheism, while removing all causes is ill thinking, and rejecting the causes commanded by Allah is an attack of the Islamic law.<sup>2</sup> Thereupon, the Prophet (peace be unto him) asked people to seek medical treatment. The followers of the Hadith have transmitted on the authority of Ossama ibn Shuraik who said:

I came upon the Prophet (peace be unto him) and his Companions, who were so still, so I saluted them and sat down. The nomads (*a'rab*) came from here and there and asked the Messenger of God, should we seek medication? He said: Do seek it. Almighty Allah has not decreed an illness without its cure except one which is old age.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Zad al-Mu'ad*, vol.2, p 66.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Taymaya, *Collection of Fatwa*, vol.8, p 528.

<sup>3</sup> Transmitted by the four. At-Tirmidhi said it was a true and authentic Hadith. See *Abu Dawud's Summary*, p 346.

In the two *Sahih*s on the authority of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said: Allah has not sent an illness without sending a cure.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, the jurists mentioned that seeking medication is appreciated and preferred, while some of them see it as obligatory.

The interpreter of the *Tahawiyah Creed* said:

Some people thought that submission to the will of Allah contradicts the urge to earn one's living and to believe in the causes behind actions. They also thought that if actions are predestined there is no need for causes. This is corrupt since earning one's living has many aspects: one is obligatory, another is preferred, a third is disliked, and a fourth is forbidden. The Prophet (peace be unto him) was the most submissive of human beings, but he also used to be ready for wars, and he frequented the marketplaces in order to earn his living.<sup>2</sup>

This is how the Prophet's Companions understood the relationship between faith in predestination and accepting causes of actions and how the latter is part of believing in predestination and does not contradict it. On the contrary, it is one of its requirements. Al-Bukhari reported that when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) went to Syria he met the princes of the cities who informed him of the spreading of epidemics in the cities. Thereupon, he consulted the emigrants and the helpers (*ansar*), then the conquest's group of emigrants who were of Quraish's eldest men. They agreed on

<sup>1</sup> Transmitted by Al-Bukhari in his *Book of Medicine*.

<sup>2</sup> *Interpretation of the Tahawiyah Creed*, p 301.

returning to avoid the epidemic disease and Umar commanded his men to that effect. Abu `Obaida said to him then:

Are you escaping Allah's predestination? Umar answered: If this is mentioned by someone else, I would not be surprised. Yes, to escape from Allah's predestination to Allah's predestination. Do not you perceive that if you came upon a valley which has two meadows, one is fertile and the other is barren, if you cared for the fertile it was through Allah's predestination and if you cared for the barren it was also through Allah's predestination?<sup>1</sup>

For that reason, a company of people from Yemen were criticized by Umar ibn Khattab because they were performing *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and had no provisions. Umar rebuked them. Mu'aweya ibn Qura said:

Umar ibn Khattab met some people from Yemen and asked them: Who are you? They answered: We are the people who submit to Allah's will. He said: Nay, you are the idle ones. The one who submits to the will of Allah is the one who implants a grain in earth and submits to the will of Allah.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Qayim al-Joziah says:

The truth concerning the Oneness of Allah cannot be accomplished except by handling the causes set by Almighty Allah. If they are not followed they will encroach upon submission itself. If they are taken owing to a weakness, it will contradict submission which is nothing but the heart's dependence on Allah in obtaining what is beneficial for the worshipper in his religion and life, and pushing away what is

<sup>1</sup> *Fath al-Bari*, vol.10 pp.150-151; *Al-Mawte'*, pp.557-558.

<sup>2</sup> *The Compiler of Sciences and Rules*, p 384.

harmful. That dependence has to have immediacy of causes, otherwise it is against wisdom and Islamic law. A slave of Allah should not turn his impotence into submission, nor his submission into impotence.<sup>1</sup>

Sahl ibn Abdullah said:

Whoever doubts movement doubts the Traditions, and whoever doubts submission, he doubts faith. Submission is the way of the Prophet (peace be unto him) and earning one's living is his manner and *Sunnah*. Whoever follows his path should not forsake his *Sunnah*.<sup>2</sup>

## The Essence of Faith

These are the tenets we have to believe in. Yet, what is meant by believing in them? How is that done? What is it that we consider the appellation fit to describe it? The people of learning differed concerning this subject and had two opinions.<sup>3</sup> The first is that 'faith' is a name for stating by word of mouth, trusting by heart, and working by limbs. This is the opinion of most of the followers of the Prophet's Traditions (people of the *Sunnah*).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Zad al-Mu'ad*, vol.3, p 67.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ways of the Righteous*, vol.3, p 116.

<sup>3</sup> There are more than two views concerning this matter, but the followers of the Traditions have only two. Other views concern other sects and are written in details in books about creeds and so there is no need to elaborate or answer in this context since they are not valid. Moreover, the scholars' consensus confirm their abandoning of truth and what is right according to Allah's Book and His Messenger's Traditions. See *Interpretation of the Tahawiyah Creed*, p 373.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Qayim said:

I bear testimony that the mortals' faith,  
Is a word of mouth, a deed, and a heart's contract

The second opinion is that faith is a term that refers to stating by the tongue and admitting by the heart and it does not refer to any physical action. However, they believe that performing what is

The interpreter said that the followers of the Traditions believed faith is a heart's confirmation, performance of the pillars of Islam, and a word. Imam al-Shafi'e (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The consensus of the Companions and the successors after them and those we caught up with say: Faith is a word of mouth, a deed, and an intention.

Iman Ahmed ibn Hanbal said:

Thereupon, the view was that faith is a word and a deed to the followers of Traditions and so are of the rites of the Traditions.

Ibn Umar at-Talmanky transmitted on his known authority of Musa ibn Harun al-Hammal who said:

Ishaq ibn Rahweya has dictated to us that faith more or less is an utterance and a deed, no doubt about that as mentioned above. We understood that through authentic transmission and the general controlled effects. In addition, the statements of the Companions of Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) and their successors and other scholars all agree upon the same matter interpreted above that faith is more or less an utterance and a deed.

Al-Hafiz ibn Abd al-Birr said in his preparatory remarks:

The jurists and the scholars of *Hadith* have reached a consensus that faith is both an utterance and a deed and faith is enhanced through adherence to Islamic law and is decreased by transgression. To them all forms of adherence are considered faith, except what is mentioned on the authority of Abu Hanifa and his followers who believe that forms of adherence cannot be called faith. They said that faith is admitting the truth of the matter and taking a resolution concerning it.

*The Interpretation of Ibn al-Qayim's Poems*, vol.2, pp.139 to 141.

verified about the Messenger of Allah concerning Islamic law and the clear statements about what is right is a duty for all people of Islamic faith, who acquire that appellation through their resolution and confirmation of its truth.<sup>1</sup>

The illustrations from the Qur'an and the Traditions are more apparent in the former opinion than the latter<sup>2</sup>, and though each group attempted to support their point of view by a number of illustrations, what is apparent is that their differences are only theoretical ones, and have no practical consequences, except that they may lead to other theoretical differences. The Interpreter of the *Tahawiyah Creed* says:

The difference between Abu Hanifa and other *Imams*, to avoid ambiguity is a difference in form only, not in context. The difference is whether the physical actions are essential for the faith of the heart or partly essential since they agree that the sinner is not excluded from faith, but he is under the will of Allah; if He so wills, he is punished, and if He wills, he is forgiven. It is only a matter of wording and the corrupt assumption is not based on it.<sup>3</sup>

The reason for that is that the two parties do not differ in defining the value and the importance of physical action in Allah's religion, though they differ in adaptation. They differ as to whether it is part of faith or whether it is a mere injunction. Those who consider it part of faith do not put it on the same level as uttering by mouth or

<sup>1</sup> See *The Tahawiyah Creed with Interpretation*, p 373; Jawainy, *Book of Guidance*, p 399; and Mala Ali al-Qara, *The Great Jurisprudence and Its Interpretation*, p 87-88.

<sup>2</sup> For the first view, see: Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslims*, vol.1 p 148; and Abu Obeid al-Qassem ibn Salaam, *The Message of Faith*, p 54.

<sup>3</sup> *The Tahawiyah Creed*, p 374.

admitting by heart, whereas their absence would indicate elimination of faith, but consider faith present in the absence of physical action. The others, though they do not consider it a constituent of faith, see it is essential and a must.

Therefore, dwelling on this case is not very useful and it is preferable to turn to another; however, it can be used to indicate some deduced measures of the mutual part between the two parties, which can define to whom the appellation applies:

1. They agreed that whoever professes faith by mouth while his heart is not sincere cannot belong to the faithful. Those are the hypocrites who are described by Almighty Allah as worthy of more punishment than the ungrateful, and that they belong to the lower level of Hell.<sup>1</sup>
2. They also agreed that knowledge through the heart alone is not sufficient to profess faith as it is essential to have knowledge as well as confirmation and admittance by the tongue. Pharaoh and his community knew that Moses and Aaron (may peace be upon them) were telling the truth, but they were unbelievers. Almighty Allah said about what Moses told Pharaoh: ***<<(Moses) said: Verily, you know that these signs have been sent down by none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth a clear sign. And I think you are, indeed, O Pharaoh doomed to destruction!>> (18:102) <<And they belied them wrongfully and arrogantly, though their own selves were convinced thereof. So see what was the end of the disbelievers.>> (27:14)*** The people of the Book knew the Prophet but they did not believe in his message. Allah Almighty says: ***<<Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize him, as they recognize their own sons. Those who***

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *The Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.1. p 147.



*destroy themselves will not believe.>> (6:20) Even Satan knew his God but he was the leader of the disbelievers.<sup>1</sup>*

The followers of the Prophet's Traditions agree that the believer in the faith is the one who prays facing the *Ka'aba* (Muslims), who will not remain eternally in Hell, who firmly and heartily believes in the religion of Islam without any sense of suspicion, and who utters the two testimonies. If he fails in one of these, he is not of the people who direct their faces towards the *Ka'aba* (Muslims), unless his failure to utter by tongue is owing to a strong reason he has no hand in, such as the person who cannot utter because of a defect in his tongue, or because of his hastened death before uttering the testimonies, or owing to a certain compulsion which prevents one from uttering by mouth.<sup>2</sup>

3. The followers of the Traditions have reached a consensus that Allah commands from his worshippers both deeds and utterance. By the latter they mean what the heart says that which is confirmation, and what is uttered by mouth which is resolution. Their main difference is in whether that which is required comes completely under faith. Some of them considered both the utterance and the deed a part of faith, while others consider only part of it should belong to faith and made the other part an outcome and a fruit of faith.<sup>3</sup>
4. They have also reached a consensus that the worshipper, if he is true in heart and professes by tongue but does not follow this by

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qassam ibn Salam, *Book of Faith*, p 102; *The Tahawiyah Creed*, pp.373-374.

<sup>2</sup> An-Nawawy, *The Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.1. p 149.

<sup>3</sup> *The Tahawiyah Creed*, p374.

physical action, will be considered disobedient and a transgressor of the commands of Allah and His Messenger (peace be unto him), and thus deserves the menace mentioned by Allah in His Book and proclaimed by the noble Messenger (peace be unto him).<sup>1</sup>

5. They have also reached a consensus that a sinner is not a disbeliever as long as he does not declare that it is his right to commit such a sin, even if he dies before repentance. The majority of the followers of the Prophetic Traditions did not proclaim the one who confirms by heart and professes by tongue, though he does not follow these by physical action, as part of faith. The followers of Abu Hanifa, thought they exclude action from faith yet they consider it one of its necessities and requirements. All agree that abandoning action does not signify disbelief.<sup>2</sup>
6. There are no points of difference among the followers of *Sunnah* that the above mentioned definition of faith through utterance, confirmation, and action is nothing but perceiving what Allah is and this deserves admittance to Paradise and not to remain eternally in Hell. Whoever declares them is requested to adhere to their requirements and give them their dues. He is not considered a disbeliever except when he commits what annuls them by utterance or action.<sup>3</sup>

What illustrates this basic matter is Osama ibn Zaid's narration saying:

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tahawiyah Creed*, p374.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Fath al-Bari*, vol.1, pp.39-40.

We were sent by Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) towards Al-Huruq<sup>1</sup>, and in the morning we attacked them. There I encountered a man who stated that there was no god but Allah, wherefore I stabbed him. I then felt guilty about this, so I mentioned the matter to the Prophet (peace be unto him). The Messenger of God asked: Did he say there is no god but Allah and you killed him? He said: O God's Messenger, he just uttered it out of fear of the sword! He said: Have you laid bare his heart to know if he meant it or not? He kept repeating the question till I wished I had not embraced Islam before that day.

The Prophet's reproach, 'Have you laid bare his heart?' reveals that we are committed to judge people by what we see and what is uttered by the tongue, but as to the heart we have no way to know what is hidden.

### **Strengthening and Weakening Faith**

On the basis of the preceding argument concerning the differences between the two mentioned parties in defining faith, there is another case in which they differ which is the strengthening or weakening of faith. Those who add deeds and actions to faith hold such opinions, while those who limit faith to utterance and heart confirmation do not. Now that you know that the difference in defining faith is a theoretical and marginal matter, likewise the difference in this case is theoretical because the party that does not consider the deepening or weakening of faith declares that people are compared and preferred by piety and good work. They vary in their reward

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<sup>1</sup> A family from the tribe of Juhaina.

and position in the eyes of the Almighty. Imam Al-Tahawy says in the *Tahawiyah Creed*:

Faith is one and its people are the same in its origin. The preference between them is by fear of Allah, piety, fear of following one's heart, and adherence to the proprieties.<sup>1</sup>

However, what is apparent from the Noble Qur'anic texts and the Prophet's Traditions is that faith deepens and weakens. To give you a few examples, Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an: <<***The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel fear in their hearts and when His verses (the Qur'an) are recited unto them, they increase their faith and they put their trust in the Lord alone.***>> (8:2) <<***Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said: Verily the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them. But it (only) increased them in Faith, and they said: Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs.***>> (3:173) <<***He it is Who sent down calmness and tranquillity into the hearts of the believers, that they may grow more in Faith along with their (present) Faith. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Ever All-Knower, All-Wise.***>> (48:4)

Some of the Prophetic Traditions in this matter are:

- Faith has more than seventy branches, the highest is uttering, 'there is no god but Allah,' and its lowest is removing what is harmful from the road. Moreover, modesty is a branch of faith.<sup>2</sup>
- The most accomplished in faith are the best in manners.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tahawiyah Creed*, p 375.

<sup>2</sup> Agreed upon. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.1, p 44; and *Sahih Muslim*, vol.1, p 6.

<sup>3</sup> Transmitted by Tirmidhi and al-Hakim.

- Whoever witnesses an evil action should change it by his hands; if he could not, by his tongue; if he could not by his heart, which is the weakest faith.<sup>1</sup>

On the authority of Abdallah ibn Mas'ud who said that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said:

No prophet sent by Allah in a community before me had no followers and companions following his path and taking his commands as models. Then they are followed by successors who say what they did not perform what they were not commanded. Whoever fought them by his hands, he is a believer and whoever stood against them by his tongue, he is a believer, and whoever fought them with his heart, he is a believer; this faith has not as atom of doubt in it.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the Prophet's Companions indicate evidence about the increase and decrease of faith. Abu ad-Dardaa (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

Part of a worshipper's religious knowledge is to understand one's faith and his weaknesses and to know if one's faith is increasing or decreasing. There are many texts that indicate the enhancing or weakening of faith according to one's deeds.<sup>3</sup>

If what is apparent from the texts indicates the increase and decrease of faith, there is no need to go beyond that, especially as it is useless to interpret and it is fruitless to differ.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Sahih Muslim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Tahawiyah Creed*, p 386.

However, what is of more importance is for the believer to attend to his faith and ask himself if it has increased or decreased and consider the cause of its decrease to avoid it and be away from it. He should seek to deepen his faith and to be good hearted, as the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to do.

The main factors that deepen one's faith are

1. Knowledge—Gaining greater knowledge means greater conviction and enlightenment. Gandab ibn Abdullah, Ibn 'Umar, and others said:

We learned faith, and when we learned Qur'an we became stronger in faith.<sup>1</sup>

What is meant here is knowledge of Allah, His attributes, His deeds, and His verses. It also means knowledge of Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) and what he revealed of ethics, methods, and legislation, his biography concerning worship, his fighting for Islam and his treatment of others. This is knowledge of Allah's Book and what it contains of information, parables, and the discrimination between good and evil.

That is because the basis of faith is to declare that Allah is our Lord and to acknowledge His appropriate attributes, and also to acknowledge the message of Muhammad (peace be unto him) and what is revealed through him. It is represented briefly by the two testimonies; whoever utters them through conviction has reached the basis of faith, yet he is not on the same level as those who know in details the meaning and the requirements of faith. Those who know in detail what the Prophet (peace be unto him) has revealed

<sup>1</sup> *Interpretation of Ibn Qayim's Poems*, vol.2, p 141.

about what happens after death of trial, punishment, and blessing are not on the same level as those who do not, though it is generally included in testifying that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him). It is likewise with those who know about the next life and the Day of Judgment and what is involved in it of Resurrection, exposition, reading of the deeds done, judgement, horror, defense, traversing the path, heaven and Hell in general without detail. The same thing is true of those who learn in detail the biography of the chosen Prophet (peace be unto him) and what it contains of perfection and those who know only the collective information. Therefore, Allah Almighty says in the Glorious Qur'an: *<<And of men and moving creatures, and cattle, in like manner of various colours. It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, Oft-Forgiving.>> (35:28) <<Is one who is disobedient to Allah prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord? Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not? It is only men of understanding who will remember.>> (39:9)*

2. Work—A lot of good work and obedience deepen the conviction and strengthen faith, while little work and indulgence in pleasures and disobedience weaken faith. Some people, because of the abundance of their sins, reach the extent of denying religion, making lawful what is forbidden and even falsifying the Messenger (peace be unto him) in order to justify their transgression and their sins. Thus they start a phase of blasphemy (may Allah protect us). That is because the basis of believing in Allah, as you already know, is to declare He is God and to be sincere to Him as a worshipper. This declaration and acknowledgment in fact are of two kinds: a theoretical acknowledgment of believing, and a practical one of disobedience and application. Whoever limits himself to the former his faith will not be complete, for the more obedient he is the better

in faith he becomes. The two kinds are essential to complete one's faith.

3. Mentioning the name of Allah and contemplation—What is meant by the former is mentioning Allah and His attributes and all that is worthy of His grace and glory. It also means reciting His words and verses as it continues linking the heart with the Creator, while its lack of it causes oblivion, and disregard of the Almighty God. It is mentioned above Umar ibn al-Khattab's call for his brothers of the Companions to deepen their faith by mentioning Allah. It is transmitted on the authority of Jafar on his grandfather 'Umeir ibn Habib who was one of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be unto him) that :

Faith increases and decreases. He was asked: How? He said: If we mention the name of Allah, thank Him, and glorify Him, these increase faith; but if we overlook that and forget to mention Allah, it is a sign of the decrease of faith. Abdullah ibn Rawaha used to give a hand to one of his companions saying: Let us have faith for an hour by sitting with the gathering and mentioning Allah.<sup>1</sup>

Almighty Allah has told us that one of the features of the people of faith is that they mention Allah while standing, sitting, or lying on their sides: <<*Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! Give us the salvation from the torment of the Fire.*>> (3:191)

What is meant by contemplation is to keep perceiving Allah's hands by pondering His creations and regarding His illustrations and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Qayim



miracles. Awareness of Allah's glory, His power, His good attributes, His glorious works are part of the faith in Allah. That awareness comes out of constant perception of the Almighty's kingdom. This can be achieved by the contemplation and veneration. If you are informed about someone's skill in a certain craft, and you were told by many others about his capability in his field, you will sense his skill more if you see with your eyes a model of his work. Your feeling of admiration will increase and will be stronger when you have a chance to examine carefully his work. The Almighty's attributes and His glorious deeds are manifest in the great universe for everybody to see. However, some people are blind to them and do not perceive more than their own pleasures and lusts. Those are the nonbelievers or the weak in faith. Others perceive in them the glory and power of Allah, His potentiality, and His design which enhances their faith and their conviction. Those are described by the Almighty Maker in the Noble Qur'an as: << *Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! Give us the salvation from the torment of the Fire.*>> (3:191) And they are also described as: << *And those who, when they are reminded of the proofs of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat.*>> (25:73) As to the others, they are described as: << *Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindled a fire; then, when it lighted all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness. (So) they could not see. They are deaf, dumb, and blind, so they return not (to the Right Path).*>> (2:17-18)

## **Part Two**

### **Nullification of Faith**

You have already learned what a Muslim should profess and should not deny, the search for 'true faith', and the real meaning of faith referred to in such issues. This part is devoted to the factors that disavow the faith of Allah's servant or rob him of faith leaving him to be counted with the unbelievers. In order to clarify this matter it is necessary to introduce the subject with a little preamble. By disclosing the principle of faith in Islam, it is considered an act of belief, and if not grasped, it is considered disbelief and therefore the rules for blasphemy are applied. We must be sure of the boundaries of the circle of faith and those of the circle of blasphemy before considering who is taken from the first to the second.

This part, therefore, consists of two studies, the first of which is an introduction to the second. The first deals with the question of how a disbeliever can become a believer, or the way to embrace faith in Almighty Allah. The second deals with how a believer can become an atheist and the retractions and disavowals of faith.

#### **How a Person Can Turn From Blasphemy to Faith (The Way to Embrace Islam)**

As revealed above, the basic principles of faith can be considered as a whole or in details. Every principle has a general as well as a detailed description. Whoever knows the details of these basic principles, believes in them and acts accordingly, he is one of those described by God as: <<*It is they who are the believers in truth.*

***For them are grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness and a generous provision (Paradise).>> (8:4)***

However, the Almighty's wisdom has required keeping the door taken by worshippers to reach faith open, in order to facilitate the matter to His worshippers and to show His grace. He accepted to let them in when they believed in the general principles under which the details are given. So, He accepted initially that they declare by their tongues and hearts that Almighty Allah is truly their God whom they alone worship, that Muhammad (peace be unto him) is God's Messenger, and that everything God revealed through His Messenger is true and right as well as a task to be performed. The key to this is the virtuous expression: There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. Whoever utters this expression by his tongue and confirms it by his heart without associating it with what can contradict it through an utterance, a deed or a belief, is admitted in faith, and will be separated from atheism.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Someone might say that the principles of faith according to the authentic Hadith are more than that, then how can the two testimonies be sufficient to be accepted in faith? The answer is that faith is of two kinds: one is general and the second is based on the details. The former is to believe in Allah and in everything revealed by His Messenger (peace be unto him) without approaching the details, since when a person testifies there is no God except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, he believes everything revealed by God's Messenger concerning the principles of faith and Islam, though he does not know them in details. According to his testimony, he is ready to believe anything else revealed by the Messenger (peace be unto him) whom he trusts. On the other hand, the person who already knows the details which he accepts and follows is stronger in faith and is more rewarded by Allah. As to the one who believes in the general principles but does not believe in the details revealed by Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him), he is recanting his testimonies and is considered an apostate, as will be indicated later.

## The Proofs

There are a number of authentic Prophetic Traditions that indicate it is required to give a general proclamation concerning the issues of faith, i.e. to proclaim the two testimonies as a whole without attending to the details. These Traditions have based faith in Islam, the merit of admittance to Paradise, and not remaining eternally in Hell, on the testimony that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His Apostle. The events in the Prophet's biography have also illustrated that the Messenger (peace be unto him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) considered one as a Muslim when he pronounced the two testimonies, without asking him at the beginning to associate their testimonies with anything else.

Here are some authentic Traditions that indicate such sources, followed by some events from the Prophet's biography (*sira*).

- Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said: I testify there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. No slave who does not doubt in this when he meets God but is admitted to Paradise.<sup>1</sup> (And in another narration): No slave who does not doubt in this is prevented from Paradise<sup>2</sup>
- The Prophet (peace be unto him) also said: Whoever dies believing that there is no god but Allah is admitted to Paradise.<sup>3</sup>
- On the authority of 'Ebada ibn as-Samet (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I heard Allah's Messenger say: Whoever

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, vol.1, p224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p 226.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p 218.

testifies that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His Apostle. God forbids the fire of Hell to touch him.<sup>1</sup>

There are other Traditions to the same effect<sup>2</sup> that indicate whoever dies believing in the Oneness of Allah and meets Allah after pronouncing the two testimonies is admitted to Paradise. Those who enter Hell will not remain there eternally; if this happens, it will be after being punished for sins and transgressions.

### **Practical *Sunnah* and the Events of the Prophet's Life**

In the practical and purified *Sunnah*, we find that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) used to accept the Islamic faith of those who pronounced the two testimonies.

Here are some examples:

1. Muslim and Malik in *Al-Mawta*, Abu Dawud and Al-Nisa'e in *The Speech of Mu'awiya ibn al-Hakim al-Salmy* disclosed that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said to a slave girl Mu'awiya ibn al-Hakim wanted to set free for atonement: Where is God? She said: In heaven. He asked: Who am I? She said: You are the Messenger of God. He said: Set her free.
2. Abu Dawud and Al-Nisa'e evident through Al-Sharid ibn Swaid ath-Thaqafi that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said to a slave-girl: Who is your God? She said: Allah. He asked: Who am I? She said: The Messenger of God. He said: Set her free because she is a believer.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, vol.1, p 229.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Nayl al-Awtar*, vol.7, p 208.

3. In the story of how Abu Bakr embraced Islam, the Prophet's biography reveals that he met the Messenger of God and said to him: Muhammad, is it true what the Quraish says that you have abandoned our gods, you mock our intelligence and call our forefathers blasphemous? God's Messenger (peace be unto him) said: Yes, I am God's Messenger and His Prophet. He sent me to reveal His Message and call you, Abu Bakr, to believe in God alone without any partner, never to worship another god, but to keep on obeying Him. Then he recited some verses of the Qur'an. Thereupon Abu Bakr accepted Islam as a religion and disbelieved in idols. He left his companions and pronounced the right of Islam. Abu Bakr then returned to his people a believer in the faith.<sup>1</sup> What the Prophet (peace be unto him) called Abu Bakr for was in fact to pronounce the two testimonies.
4. In the story of Khalid ibn Said embracing of Islam, it is reported in the *sira* that he met God's Messenger (peace be unto him) while he was in Ajyad and asked him: O Muhammad, what do you call people to? Muhammad (peace be unto him) said: I call you to (worship) Allah alone without any partner and to believe in Muhammad as Allah's slave and Messenger, to abandon the worship of a stone that does not hear, harm, benefit, nor does it realize who worships or does not worship it. Khalid said: I testify that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) was very pleased with his embracing Islam.<sup>2</sup>
5. In the story of Abu Dhar al-Ghafari's faith in Islam, he said: I was the fourth of Islam, three believed before me and I was the fourth. I met Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) and said:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *The Biography of the Prophet (Sira)*, vol.1, p 433.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, p 445.

Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah. I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is God's Messenger. I then saw a beaming look on the face of Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him).<sup>1</sup> This is the story in brief. Al-Bukhari revealed the complete story of Abu Dhar's acceptance of Islam, including that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said to Abu Dhar soon after embracing Islam: Return to your people and tell them what you have heard from me. Abu Dhar said: By the One Who sent you with the truth, I will urge the matter openly. He came out and when he reached the mosque he loudly announced: I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Thereupon, the people came upon him and beat him until he lay flat.<sup>2</sup> In this account there is a strong and clear indication that the Prophet's Companions used to embrace Islam by pronouncing the two testimonies.

6. In the story of how At-Tufayl ibn Amre ad-Dossy embraced Islam, the *Sira* recounts that he was an obeyed master of the nobles in Dos who had come to Makkah. The noble men of the Quraish met him and warned him of Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him), and forbade him to meet or hear the speeches of the Prophet (peace be unto him). At-Tufayl recounted: By God, they kept warning me until I concluded I would not listen to anything from him, nor speak to him. I even stuffed my ears with some cotton when I went to the mosque so nothing could reach my ears of what he was saying. I went to the mosque to find Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) praying at the *Ka'aba*. I came near him, and Allah let me hear what he was saying. It was a fine speech, so I said to myself: By my mother's loss of me, by Allah I am an intelligent man, I can distinguish

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *The Biography of the Prophet (Sira)*, vol.1, p 447.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

between what is good from what is bad, so why should I not listen to the speech of that man? If what he says is good, I accept it; and if it is bad, I reject it. He added: I stayed till Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) left for his home and followed him. When he came into his house I went in and said: O Muhammad your people told me such and such a thing (what they said). They kept scaring me of you until I stuffed my ears with cotton in order not to hear your speech which sounds good. Let me hear then your knowledge. He went on saying: Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) then revealed Islam to me and recited some verses from the Qur'an. By Allah I had never heard anything better nor any matter that is just as fair. I therefore believed in Islam and gave a testimony of truth.<sup>1</sup> The testimony of truth is to testify that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad (peace be unto him) is the Messenger of Allah, as explained in certain places.

7. In the story of Khalid ibn al-Walid's embracing of Islam, the biography (*sira*) recounts that he approached the Messenger of Allah in Medinah. His brother Al-Walid ibn al-Walid had written to him asking him to come and to embrace Islam. Khalid said: My brother met me and asked me to hurry up because the Messenger of Allah was informed about my coming and was pleased and waiting for us. (He was in the company of Amre ibn al-As and Othman ibn Talha). We hurried in our walk. I looked at him and he kept smiling at me until I stopped and saluted him as a Prophet. He responded cheerfully, and I said: I testify that there is no God but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. He said: Come. Then he added: Thanks be to Allah who

<sup>1</sup> *Sirat Ibn Hisham*, vol.1, pp.407-408.



has guided you. I perceived you have intelligence and I hoped it would only lead you to what is good.<sup>1</sup>

That was the beginning of accepting Islam by many of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) before and after Hijra.

Such incidents, in addition to the authentic Traditions, all illustrate one thing on which the followers of the Prophet (peace be unto him) have a consensus, and that is embracing the faith of God (Islam) cannot take place except by pronouncing the two testimonies. After such texts, no one can ascertain the Islam of a person if that person does not testify by utterance and by faith in his heart. Likewise, no one can ascertain that someone is an unbeliever if he pronounces the two testimonies and does not do anything to annul them.

However, it is not sufficient to pronounce one of the two testimonies to be considered a Muslim. It might be said that in a few of the above Traditions and in other places that it is sufficient to pronounce the first testimony (i.e. there is no god but Allah). The answer to this is that it actually refers to the two testimonies as explained in other Traditions.<sup>2</sup>

There are no differences among scholars that pronouncing the two testimonies and believing in them cannot save one from eternal fire. It is sufficient to be accepted in faith of Islam if it is associated with what contradicts them or contradicts one of them. A person who says for instance: I believe there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, but I do not accept the

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *The Biography of the Prophet (Sira)*, vol.1, p 520.

<sup>2</sup> See *Nawawy's Interpretation*.

necessity of *zakat* or *Hajj*, or that adultery, usury, or murder, or any other verdicts of Islam given through the Qur'an or the revelation of the Prophet (peace be unto him), but I believe it was something outdated, it belonged to a certain community or a certain generation. Such a person cannot be judged as a Muslim or a man of faith. And if he pronounced the two testimonies and associated them with a peculiar interpretation that leads to the disbelief in the Oneness of God, in some of His attributes and names, or if he disbelieved in some verses of the Qur'an, even though it was a verse, a word, or an utterance, his uttering of the testimonies would be futile since it is associated with what denies the words of God or His Messenger (peace be unto him).<sup>1</sup>

The same applies to the person who followed a religion, or a sect of religion; uttering the testimonies are insufficient in denying a certain principle or more of another faith. It is necessary therefore to deny that principle in addition to pronouncing the testimonies. If a person believed in the Oneness of God and that Muhammad (peace be unto him) is His Apostle, but that it was for a certain community and at a certain time, his testimonies would not be considered sufficient to be considered a Muslim. His admittance of Muhammad's Message does not negate what was reputed about him of his belief that it was for a certain community or a certain time. He has to acknowledge that Muhammad (peace be unto him) was the Messenger of Allah to all people, at all times.

Some scholars mentioned in that context a general rule, the sum of which is that a person is not judged to be a Muslim except when he professes the two testimonies in such a way as to negate all his incorrect beliefs. If it does not happen, he has to utter the

<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Abd al-Wahab, *Rissalit Kashf ash-Shubahat*.

testimonies and deny the wrong beliefs not covered by uttering the testimonies.

It is noteworthy in this context to refer to the fact that the expression, 'there is no god but Allah', negates all false images about the Creator, His divinity and His sovereignty since it requires His singularity as God, in His attributes, names, and deeds. It also demands disassociates anything improper to Him. Therefore, whoever pronounces it, he denies all his false beliefs about the Almighty Creator. As to the other testimony, it negates most of the false images concerning the status of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) and all divine secrets revealed to him. However, it does not negate some of the false beliefs previously mentioned, that His message was assigned to certain communities. For such people, they should declare that the message of the Prophet (peace be unto him) is universal.

The above concerns the person who was a disbeliever at first and did not believe in God before. As to the apostate, his belief in Islam cannot be accepted unless he professes what he denied concerning the faith in addition to the two testimonies. If his apostasy is because of his denial of the Oneness of God or of His Message, the testimonies are sufficient, if not he has to mention the issues he denied. For example, the person who denied the obligation of *zakat* (almsgiving) or forbidding adultery or usury, cannot come back to Islam until he testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Prophet, and professes the obligation or the forbidding of what he previously denied.

It might be useful in this context to draw attention to what has already been mentioned while discussing the true faith in that scholars have come to a consensus that pronouncing the two testimonies is sufficient to consider the person who pronounces

them a Muslim. This is an external procedure for the sake of applying worldly judgement. However, it is not sufficient for not remaining eternally in the Fire of Hell until it is associated with the heart's confirmation. Whoever professes them both following the above conditions, he is treated according to the rules of Islam in worldly life, even if he were a hypocrite in truth. This is because we are commanded to build our own verdicts in this life upon what is apparent and external, and leave the inner secrets to Almighty God, as no one but Him knows them. You have seen above how the Prophet disapproved the action of Osama ibn Zaid when he refused to believe in what was visible and killed the person who said there is no god but Allah, believing he was insincere in saying it.

## When the Believer Becomes a Disbeliever

As already explained, you know how people come to faith, the faith of the Almighty Allah. However, those who are admitted to the faith are different types.

Some remain in their faith and die admitting that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger. Some turn away because of their denials and ingratitude. The people of faith of the first type vary, some are generous in their charity, others are thrifty, while still others are unjust towards themselves. Some of them are admitted into Paradise without reckoning, some have a mild reckoning, while others are punished in Hellfire until God is kind to them and saves them out of His kindness.

As to the reasons of turning back after being admitted to Islam, we shall mention first the general rule agreed upon by the followers of *Summah* and then attempt to explain it.

### The Rule

To illustrate the general rule regarding when beliefs, speech, and the deeds become blasphemous, we have selected what Imam At-Tahawy said in his book *The Tahawiyah Creed* to express the idea:

We call the people of our direction (in prayers) Muslims and believers as long as they acknowledge what the Prophet revealed, and as long as they believe in him and in all that he said. We do not consider anyone of our direction in prayers (i.e. anyone who prays as we pray) blasphemous for a sin unless he considers it his lawful right.

We do not say that there is no harm in faith for a person who has sinned. A worshipper does not quit faith except through denying what admitted him to the faith.<sup>1</sup>

The explanation of this rule is that the Law-Giver has made an entrance to faith in Islam, this door is the profession and confirmation of the two testimonies. Whoever is admitted to Islam through that door, cannot leave unless a speech, a deed, or a belief that contradicts his former profession and confirmation of the two testimonies is issued forth. You have already learned that the testimony, there is no god but Allah, signifies the uniqueness of Allah as God and in His names, attributes, and deeds. It refers to the Oneness of Allah, and that no human being can turn anywhere else except to God to worship. The meaning of the second testimony, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, is to profess and acknowledge everything revealed through Muhammad concerning Islamic laws, what was revealed to him of divine secrets, and that all revelations came from Allah. It is also an acknowledgment of the manners and attributes of prophethood, of honesty, truth, intelligence, privilege, exemplar communication, etc.

Therefore, whoever says something or does a deed that indicates the denial of something in faith, he negates his former profession of the two testimonies, and forsakes Allah's faith. If his speech or deed is true to his intention and belief, he is considered blasphemous in this world and the next. Therefore, he is treated as a disbeliever in this life and the rules of apostasy are applied to him, the most important of which is his repentance, then death if he does not repent. He is to be eternally in Hellfire if he dies then.

<sup>1</sup> *Tahawiyah Creed.*

However, if the believer transgressed and said or did something considered in Islam as disobedience to God, it is not considered a reason to be out of the faith even if he did not repent, and if there is nothing to indicate his negation of the two testimonies or one of them he is then under Allah's will; if He wishes He can punish him for his sins and transgression, send him to Hellfire, and finally to Paradise. A number of authentic Traditions indicate that whoever dies and has an atom's weight of faith can be forgiven by Allah, if He so wills he is admitted to Paradise without punishment in Hellfire. <<*Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him, but He forgives whom He pleases, sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away.*>> (4:116)

### **Kinds of Negations of Faith**

From this you learn that the factors that cause one to be repudiated from faith vary, but they all belong to that general rule. Every kind has a lot of illustrations and details that are difficult to enumerate. However, they can be grouped together in four main kinds. They are that which implies the denial of Allah's place, that which implies the denial in Allah's names and attributes, that which implies denial of Allah' Divinity, that which implies the denial of the Message or suspicion in the Messenger (peace be unto him).

In each of these four kinds a number of illustrations of deeds, speech and beliefs all deny the two testimonies and reject its possessor of Islam, God forbid. The following are details of each kind with some examples as illustrations:

## The First Kind

You have learned that the first kind of unity is the Unity of Lordship and kingdom (monotheism). It is the belief that Allah Almighty is Lord and Possessor of everything, the Creator and Bestower of everything. He is the sole regulator of the universe with His Will, His Knowledge, and His Wisdom. Therefore, any remark or belief that denies these divine traits or some of them is considered blasphemous and a form of apostasy. The denial of the Creator, claiming there is something not created by Almighty God, or ascribing the creation or the planning of the universe to other than the Almighty as chance, nature, and such things are all among the factors that deny the Divine traits. There are other factors as denying Allah's power over all of creation; assuming sustenance comes from other than the Almighty; believing in partners with God; claiming that God created human beings and has neglected them, or does not help, keep or plan their affairs, in addition to other such matters that discredit the traits of God.

It is likewise blasphemous and a form of apostasy for a person to claim for himself some of these traits as to claim Lordship for oneself, such as the claim of Pharaoh: <<...*I am your lord most high...*>> (79:24), or to claim that he possesses, bestows sustenance, or plans anything without the help of Almighty God. Likewise, those who believe his claim are blasphemous.

## The Second Kind

This kind includes denial in the second kind of monotheism which is the Unity of God through what is proper of names and attributes.



Allah Almighty has illustrated, and the Prophet (peace be unto him) has proved, His possession of certain attributes, and Allah has negated others which were also negated by the Prophet (peace be unto him). Whoever negates or diminishes any of the attributes illustrated and proved by Allah or by His Messenger, he is blasphemous. Likewise, the person who claims that Allah possesses certain attributes negated by the Prophet is blasphemous.

Blasphemy of attributes are two types: blasphemy of negation, and blasphemy of affirmation. The first includes the negation of any of the attributes of Allah, such as negating His complete knowledge, His ability, His life, or His existence, His sitting firmly on the throne of His kingdom, His words, His mercy, His power, pride, or other attributes confirmed in the Glorious Book or the Traditions.

It also includes the interpretation of Allah's names and attributes of what discredits or belittles them, as the person who acknowledges the knowledge of Allah but claims that it is the ultimate knowledge and that Allah knows nothing about details, or to liken one of His attributes to what human beings possess as claiming that Almighty can hear and see as people do and so on.

The second kind, which is unbelief of what is confirmed, includes confirming any attributes to Allah which have been negated by the Almighty or by His Messenger (peace be unto him), as confirming that He has a son, a daughter, a mistress, drowsiness, sleep, negligence, death, or any of the human blemishes.

Likewise, the person who confirms any of Allah's attributes to himself or to another creature is blasphemous as well as the person who believes his allegation. For instance, if a person claims he has the same knowledge as Allah, or such a person has the same wisdom as Almighty Allah, the speaker as well as the believer in his

words are considered blasphemous because confirming partnership with Allah in His attributes diminishes and belittles the Almighty. Any kind of scorn of Allah or of His attributes is a form of blasphemy and apostasy.

### **The Third Kind**

It is every remark, deed or belief that implies refutation of the third type of monotheism which is the Oneness of Divinity. It is to certify that Allah alone is the truly worshipped Creator and that no other one deserves any forms of worship. Whoever utters any word, does any deeds, or has a certain belief that implies the negation of that right to Almighty God, or scorns any part of it, attributing part of it to other than Almighty God, is considered blasphemous.

Most apostates belong to this category, as the majority of them profess, in their past and present, the existence of the Almighty Creator, and many of them approve of the unity of His lordship, His attributes of power, planning, bestowing of sustenance, resurrection of life, claiming of life, etc.

Allah Almighty has mentioned in His Glorious Qur'an that many who associate others with Allah have also professed that Allah was their Creator. <<*And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: Allah. How then are they turned away (from the worship of Allah Who created them)?*>> (43:87) <<*And indeed if you ask them: Who has created the heavens and the earth? They will surely say: The Almighty, the All-Knower created them.*>> (43:9)

Blasphemy has penetrated the hearts of most unbelievers because they denied the Maker of being worthy to be the sole One to be worshipped, regardless of whether that denial was expressed in their hearts or revealed through their words or deeds. Their blasphemy was also because of declaring others deserve worship, whether their declaration was confirmed by heart and out of conviction, or an utterance or a deed indicating it.

In fact, this type of blasphemy involves its possessor in the previous two because whoever acknowledges that Allah Almighty is the sole Creator of everything, the Planner of everything, and acknowledges His Attributes of Grace and Perfection, is required to acknowledge absolute Divinity to Him alone and the merit of worship to Him alone. If he denies this and worships another, or worships another while worshipping God, his acknowledgement of the lordship of Allah above all is false and valueless. As-San'ani says:

It is the duty of the person who professes the unity of lordship to Allah to follow that by worshipping only One. If he does not, his earlier profession is false.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the unity of Allah in worshipping Him is the test set for worshippers in this worldly life. **<<And I (Allah) created not the jinns and men except that they should worship Me (Alone).>>** (51:56)

Hence it is clear that the testimony, 'there is no god but Allah,' is contradicted by two things: negating the Creator is worthy of worship in any form, and projecting that worth onto any of Allah's creations. Utterance, conduct, or conviction implying either of these two cases leads the doer to blasphemy.

<sup>1</sup> *Purification of Conviction (Tatheer Al-E'tiqad)*, p 9.

The worship which is due only to Allah is submission, humility, obedience, allegiance. These can include love, awe, seeking help, praying, submission, pleading, prostrating, bowing, kneeling, fasting, slaughtering, circling the Ka'aba, humility, etc.

Thereupon, the person who negates by an utterance, conviction, or deed the merits of Allah means he is blasphemous. Whoever says or believes that Almighty Allah is not to be held in awe, prayed to, asked for assistance, pleaded to, fasting for, going on *Hajj* for, and that doing or saying anything considered as a form of worship according to the Islamic law is considered blasphemous.

This is because his mockery and belittling clearly indicates his non-conviction of the Creator's merit to such worship. Likewise, the person who denies Allah's worthiness of obedience by following his commands and avoiding his prohibitions is blasphemous. Almighty Allah included this in His Book and urged His Messenger (peace be unto him) to follow it. Whoever claims that anything in the Islamic law is not worthy of following and applying, or is not suitable for our time and so forth, is an unbeliever in respect to that call. This is because giving commands, judgement and legislation are other characteristics of Divinity: <<***You do not worship besides Him but only names which you have named (forged), you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. The command (or the judgement) is for none but Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him (i.e. His Monotheism), that is the (true) straight religion, but most men know not.***>> (12:40) Compliance and obedience are some of the characteristics of Allah's servants.

In contrast to that, whoever ascribes such worship to other than Allah is blasphemous. The person who claims to be worthy of such worship, or who orders people to practice for him and accepts his

words, or who practices some of these acts of worship for him is heretical. Likewise is the person who wishes to be worshipped in the same manner even though he does not command people to do so. As the one who likes to be awed, asked assistance of, or to be depended upon, pleaded to, knelt before, prostrated to, humiliated before, or has performed for him any of the acts which should be directed only to the Almighty Creator all such people, both the worshipped and the worshipper, are considered blasphemous.

So is the person who claims what is not legislated by Allah to be the right way because of his power, judicial opinion, or he claims to have the right to change what is forbidden to be lawful, and to forbid what is lawful. This includes setting laws and decrees that legalize adultery, usury, or expose what is forbidden of the body, or change the law of punishment which is set in the Glorious Qur'an or in the Traditions of God's Messenger (peace be unto him). It also includes changing the legal measures in *zakat* (almsgiving), in the law of inheritance, in atonement, acts of worship, and others established by the Law-Giver in the Qur'an and Traditions.

Whoever believes in such false deities and acknowledges what they claim of divine rights is an unbeliever. <<*And verily, We have sent among every nation a Messenger (proclaiming): Worship Allah, and avoid false deities. Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified. So travel through the land and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth).*>> (16:36) <<*There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in false deities and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.*>> (2:256) The 'trustworthy handhold' is to testify that there is no god but Allah since this negates all kinds of worship

except that of Allah and confirms all worship to Allah alone without any partner.

From this we learn that if a ruler assumes the right in issuing contrary legislation to what is confirmed in the Qur'an and the Traditions, turning what is confirmed as forbidden, in the Qur'an and the Traditions, into something lawful or forbidding what is confirmed as lawful by Allah, he is then turning to blasphemy because he believes it is in his power to abandon what is legislated by Islam, in preference to what he has legislated for people. Whoever believes this is possible is one of the unbelievers.<sup>1</sup>

This verdict, however, does not cover issuing legislation concerning matters not dealt with in the legislated texts nor in the individual verdicts of *ijtihad* about matters of differences among scholars. Whoever issues a law allowing adultery, usury, or the offenses agreed upon and forbidden in the legislation of Allah, he is turning to blasphemy. All those who contribute in issuing such a law by their acceptance are also considered blasphemous. However, the legislator of a law that organizes traffic for instance or any such matters not mentioned in the Islamic legislation cannot be considered blasphemous for that we also cannot say that putting fixed prices for commodities is against Islamic legislation simply because some scholars do not approve of it. that is because it is a matter of individual interpretation. Some jurists approve of it.

You must learn as well that the people who acknowledge and accept the rights for these false deities, follow their laws in judgement, and their anti-Islamic legislation turn to blasphemy. ***<<Have you seen those (hypocrites) who claim that they believe in that which has been sent down to you, and that which was***

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Game' Al-Farid*, p 278.

*sent down before you, and they wish to go for judgement (in their disputes) to the false judges while they have been ordered to reject them. But Satan wishes to lead them far astray.>> (4:60) <<Or have they partners with Allah (false gods), who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not allowed. And had it not been for a decisive Word (gone forth already), the matter would have been judged between them. And verily for the wrong-doers, there is a painful torment.>> (42:21)*

### **The Fourth Kind**

It is any speech, deed, or conviction that implies refutation of the Message or the Messenger (peace be unto him) because it negates the testimony that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. This testimony signifies believing and acknowledging that everything revealed by the Messenger of Allah is true and that Muhammad (peace be unto him) was qualified by God and equipped with all traits in order to convey the Message in the most accomplished manner.

From this you learn there are two factors that negate the testimony of faith: the first is refuting God's Messenger (peace be unto him); the second is denying or doubting parts of what is revealed by God's Messenger (peace be unto him).

The first factor includes affiliating anything with the Messenger (peace be unto him) which contradicts his being selected by God to convey His religion to humankind. Therefore, anyone who doubts the truth or honesty of the Messenger (peace be unto him) or his piety or wisdom, etc., is considered blasphemous. Likewise, whoever abuses, mocks, or belittles the Messenger (peace be unto him) or his confirmed conduct turns to blasphemy.

The second factor includes the denial of any of the issues revealed by God's Messenger (peace be unto him). So, whoever denies what is revealed and confirmed by the Messenger (peace be unto him) concerning Resurrection, the Day of Judgment, justice, the path believers have to take, Heaven and Hell, etc., he is blasphemous.

Moreover, whoever rejects anything in the Qur'an, whatever it is, he is blasphemous, since all verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the Messenger (peace be unto him) as the words of God. So, whoever denies any of it is refuting the Messenger (peace be unto him). And whoever denies any of the confirmed verdicts in the Qur'an or *Sunnah* turns to disbelief, as the person who contests that prayers and almsgiving (*zakat*) are obligatory, or that adultery and robbery are forbidden, or who assumes an extra rite in prayers, or the possibility of praying without ablution, etc. is irreverent to the faith.

However, a person who denies something unknown in his religion, which might be known only to the scholars, is forgiven and so is the person who disputes a verdict by a scholar which has no consensus concerning it. In this context, Imam An-Nawawy says:

...it is likewise (i.e. a person commits blasphemy) concerning anyone who denies what the consensus in the community is agreed upon about religious matters if knowledge about it is widespread such as: the five daily prayers; the fasting the month of *Ramadan*; washing from impurity; the prohibition of adultery, wine, and marriage to relations he is forbidden to marry, etc., unless he is a recent believer (new convert) and is not aware of the limitations. If then he denies something in Islam out of ignorance, he is not blasphemous. However, if the consensus concerning an obscure matter is reached through the learning of particular



individuals—such as the interdiction of a marriage to a woman and her aunt (from both sides), the revocation of inheritance rights to the premeditated murderer, the ruling of the sixth part of an inheritance going to the grandmother; and such verdicts—the person who denies such verdicts is not blasphemous, but is forgiven and excused because these matters are not widely known by the public.<sup>1</sup>

Whoever renounces a verse of the Qur'an, a mystery, or other undisputed information will be, according to the Glorious Qur'an, considered blasphemous.

Whoever denies the sending of Messengers before Muhammad (peace be unto him) is blasphemous and so is the person who denies what is recounted in their stories with their communities, and who denies the manner of the beginning of creation as mentioned by God, or claims another manner different from what is mentioned in the verses of the Glorious Book. Likewise, whoever denies the existence of *jinn* and the devil (Satan) becomes blasphemous and an apostate, and so is the person who denies the throne, the chair, the preserved tablet and the pen, and who denies a historical character whose existence is confirmed by the Qur'an, and who denies a message or prophethood mentioned in the Qur'an. It is the same with whoever contradicts any of these matters with what is improper, or who denies that God sent other messengers unnamed by Him, other than the known ones, because God mentioned this in more than one place. Whoever rejects the miraculous nature of the Glorious Qur'an is blasphemous as well because the miracles are confirmed by God and actual life. And so is the person who claims to be a prophet after Muhammad (peace be unto him), or the one

<sup>1</sup> *Nawawy's Interpretation*, vol.1, p 205.

who believes the claimer because the Qur'an proclaims that Muhammad (peace be unto him) is the last of the prophets.

Satisfaction with blasphemy and dissatisfaction with Islam is a form of blasphemy. It is useful here to reiterate what we have already mentioned, which is that these illustrations and details of what refutes the two testimonies are only examples and there might be others. We also draw attention to the satisfaction of blasphemy and the dissatisfaction with Islam, though in its reality it negates the two testimonies and implies the denial of the Oneness of God and the Message. Whoever says they believe the one who denies the two testimonies or says they refute the one who uttered them might not be suspected of blasphemy, even though the first statement is a compliment to the speaker. There are subtleties of meaning in speech, deeds, and circumstances. Their significance is not trivial to the Law-giver nor to the people when the phrasing is a blatant claim of stating the blasphemous to be true or claiming a statement of belief to be fallacious. Whoever communicates such declarations is an apostate and blasphemous. Some of these subtleties are considered in the following pages.

### **The Subtleties of Satisfaction with Blasphemy**

One of the subtleties of satisfaction with blasphemy is not telling the blasphemous—whether they are pagans, apostates, or associate partners with God—that they are blasphemous. This refers also to the lack of suspicion in their blasphemy or not correcting any of their blasphemous convictions.<sup>1</sup> Whoever learns an individual or a group, from a certain cult, sect, order, or a religious group, believes in an obvious heresy and thinks they are not heretic or apostates, or

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Game' al-Farid*, p 277.

states that their convictions, or some of them, are true, he becomes a partner in their heresy and becomes one like them.

However, this rule requires clarification and caution when applied. This is because when judging the apostasy of a person, one is supposed to know the truth about those he considers believers and not heretic. If he does not know their true nature and how heretic they are, the verdict of apostasy is not allowed to be given at once. He has to explain clearly and through sound and obvious statements what is attributed to the group. If he denies their heresy after that, his judgement is then considered a form of heresy because his denial is an adoption of their conviction and acknowledgement of its soundness.

Nonetheless, it should be noticed that the heresy of some sects has become as well known among people, such as that of the Jews, the Christians, the Magus, and others, so that whoever denies the heresy of such sects is at once considered blasphemous.

As to the sects and orders which are supposedly not familiar to the people and their heretic doctrines unknown, one has to be cautious in judging the person who does not consider their followers apostates until he is absolutely sure and can identify the nature of heresy in such sects and orders.<sup>1</sup> This is especially so because some of these religious orders claim to be related to Islam and pretend to the public they do not deny anything in the doctrines of Islam. They cover and conceal, at first, what would turn the public against them in respect to the plain and open denial of the principles of Islam or some of them.

<sup>1</sup> *Unification Group*, p 126.

It is conditional likewise, in order to consider a person a nonbeliever, that the suspected one be considered a nonbeliever according to an accepted standard. Since worthy scholars differ (i.e. some consider it a factor negating faith while others do not), then it would be invalid to call the people who do not consider them heretic as blasphemous. It is, for instance, like considering *al-Khawarej* and other groups on which there is no general consensus about their apostasy, as heretics. In this group is included the person who does not consider the deliberate neglecting of prayers as apostasy or heresy as long as he has not negated its obligation. If the aforementioned conditions are realized, and the Muslim denies the heresy of disbelievers and affirms their convictions, he is then considered as the utterer of the conviction which made them blasphemous and heretic. He then negates his former proclamation of the two testimonies of faith. In addition, he is considered a person who denies the texts and illustrations that consider such people heretics, and so he is blasphemous because of the denial of such texts.

### **Accompanying Heretics and Showing Acceptance of Their Faith**

You have learned that the testimony—there is no god but Allah—negates the worship of any other but Almighty God, in addition to what it asserts of the merit of worshipping Allah alone. This is illustrated in the verse of the Qur'an which says: <<***Worship Allah alone and keep away from all false deities.***>> (16:36) In order to realize the significance of this testimony, it is not sufficient for a human being to worship God unless he avoids worshipping others as well, because the value of worship is negated if any other creation receives any kind of homage which is due only to Allah. This is an agreed upon matter. Another matter of general

consensus is that the chief characteristics of nonbelievers is that they do not worship God in an deferential manner, or they associate partners with Him, as well as denying the Message, refuting the Messenger (peace be unto him), and supporting matters which negate Islam and go completely contrary to the two testimonies of faith. This is also agreed upon.

The limit the Muslim should not exceed in protecting the religion or faith and in regards to the treatment and amicability of relationships with nonbelievers is also specified. It is a limit which does not accede acceptance of their religion and their heresy. If the Muslim exceeds this limit and starts to imitate heretics; show acceptance of their false religion; and help them with aid, money, and friendship, and compounds this with the severance of friendship with Muslims, or he enhances the relationships with non-Muslims over that of the Muslims, sacrificing the latter for the former, he is then one of them and is considered a deserter of one's faith. He becomes heretical and a strong enemy of Allah and His Messenger (peace be unto him). The only exceptional case is the one who is forced to do so because he falls under the power of the irreligious. He is ordered to obey them in their false beliefs, threaten him with murder, or prosecution. He is allowed to agree with them by tongue while keeping his heart filled with the tranquillity of faith. Though that matter is implied in the meaning of the two testimonies, as mentioned above, there are many Qur'anic verses, however, that oblige the Muslim to sever his relationship with heretics, and oppose them in religion. Many of such verses indicate the blasphemy and apostasy of those who do not perform this obligatory duty. If you go back to the meaning of the two testimonies along with what is apparent from these texts, you will learn that it is quite true and cannot have another interpretation. Here are some of these texts, not all because they are so many,

outnumbered only by the texts concerning the Oneness of God and those commanding the worship of Allah.

The Qur'anic verse: <<***Let not the believers take the disbelievers as supporters instead of the believers, and whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment), and to Allah is the final return.***>> (3:28) Almighty Allah, therefore, has forbidden taking heretics as helpers and friends instead of befriending the believers. He informed us that whoever does is not a believer. In his interpretation of the above verse Ibn Jarir said:

It means that you should not—as believers—take the nonbelievers as supporters and helpers, assist them in their religion, and raise them above Muslims and expose the Muslim community's weaknesses. Whoever does that has nothing of Allah in him, which means he has no relation with Allah and Allah has no relation with him because of his apostasy from his faith and indulgence in heresy.<sup>1</sup>

As to God's words: <<***...except if you indeed fear a danger from them.***>> They mean the same as His words: <<***...except him (the believers) who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with faith.***>> This signifies that the Muslim is so conquered that he cannot show enmity towards them and so he shows cohabitation while his heart is at peace, full of faith towards Allah with hatred and enmity toward heresy and the enemies of Allah. Ibn Jarir said:

...except when you are pious, concealing your enmity towards them, not joining them in their heresy and not assisting them against a Muslim by your action.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Tabary's Interpretation*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The limit of force which has to be considered in that context will be covered on the following pages.

***<<O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as 'Auliya (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but helpers to one another. And if any among you takes them as helpers, then surely he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are wrong-doers. And you see those in whose hearts there is a disease (of hypocrisy), they hurry to their friendship, saying: We fear lest some misfortune of disaster may befall us. Perhaps Allah may bring victory or a decision according to His will. Then they will become regretful for what they have been keeping as a secret in themselves.>> (5:51-52)***

Almighty Allah has forbidden that Jews and Christians be taken as protectors, and mentioned that whoever does so is one of them. The person who seeks protection and helps the Jews becomes one of them, and the one who befriends and asks protection of Christians becomes one of them. It is the same as one who befriends a heretic, he becomes like him in heresy. Ibn Hatim has recounted on the authority Muhammad ibn Serin who said:

Abdullah ibn Ataba said: Everyone of you should protect himself in order not to become a Jew or a Christian unawares. He said: We thought he meant the Qur'anic verse ***<<O you who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians as friends...then surely he is one of them.>>***

Then contemplate the excuse of those who turned to blasphemy by their friendship to the Jews and Christians, which is not accepted by Almighty God. It is their fear of the people of the Book and their power; their fear concerns position, wealth and worldly life. Contemplation will give you a hint and a reference to the meaning of being 'forced', what could be accepted of it and what could not.

***<<You see many of them taking the disbelievers as their protectors and helpers. Evil indeed is that which their own selves have sent forward before them, for that (reason) Allah's wrath fell upon them and in torment they will abide. And had they believed in Allah, and in the Prophet and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them (the disbelievers) as protectors and helpers, but many of them are the rebellious and disobedient to Allah>> (5:80-81)***

Almighty Allah illustrates that faith in Allah and His Prophet (peace be unto him) is tied to disavowing relationships with nonbelievers, while confirmation of their friendship and cooperation necessitates lack of faith and disbelief. On the other hand, Almighty Allah grounded His wrath and their eternity in suffering on the basis of befriending nonbelievers, and stated that befriending them cannot happen for a believer because people of faith oppose them and never become their friends or protectors.

Look how the Almighty considered not befriending nonbelievers as part of the two testimonies which express believing in Allah, His Prophet (peace be unto him), and what was revealed to him. The connection between the two issues is already discussed.

***<<Give to the hypocrites the tidings that there is for them a painful torment. Those who take disbelievers for protectors, helpers, or friends instead of believers, do they seek honour, power, and glory with them? Verily, then to Allah belongs all honour, power, and glory.>> (4:138-139)*** Here Allah makes taking nonbelievers as friends one of the characteristics of hypocrisy.

***<<You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and the***



*Last Day, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred (people). For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with Ruh (proofs, light, and true guidance) from Himself. And We will admit them to Gardens (Paradise) under which rivers flow, to dwell therein (forever). Allah is pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Verily, it is the Party of Allah that will be the successful.>> (58:22)* Here the Almighty states that there is not a believer who can befriend a nonbeliever, and whoever does is not a believer. If Allah here negates faith from people who befriend their father, brother, or people if they were nonbelievers, what about befriending the nonbelievers who are not relatives? It is more reason to become a nonbeliever.

*<<Verily, those who have turned back as disbelievers after the guidance has been manifested to them, Satan has beautified for them (their false hopes), and (Allah) prolonged their term (age). This is because they said to those who hate what Allah has sent down: 'We will obey you in part of the matter,' but Allah knows their secrets. Then how (will it be) when the angels will take their souls at death, smiting their faces and their backs? That is because they followed that which angered Allah, and hated that which pleased Him. So He made their deeds fruitless.>> (47:25 to 28)* Here God states that the reason for their apostasy and heresy is telling nonbelievers: 'We will obey you in certain matters;' so what they learned of guidance and truth did not alter what they promised and stated to those against Islam.

*<<And it has already been revealed to you in the Book (the Qur'an) that when you hear the Verses of Allah being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them. Surely, Allah will collect the*

*hypocrites and disbelieves all together in Hell.>> (4:140)* Allah has revealed to the faithful in His Book that if they hear His verses mocked and disbelieved, they should not stay in the company of such people until they indulge in another matter. Whoever stays with heretics and mockers of Allah's verses, he becomes like them. This was revealed at the beginning of Islam when it was limited to one country. What then about our time when Islam is in its glory in many Islamic countries? What about those who ask disbelievers and mockers of Allah into their country and take them as protectors, friends, companions, and advisors; listen to their heresy and mockery; and cooperate with them, dismissing, and sending away Muslim scholars? This is accepting heresy and heretics which can deprive the person of his faith and submerge him in heresy (may Allah protect us). Silence in places of heresy is evidence of acceptance.

The Muslim then should beware of the subtleties, in the same manner as he should beware of open heresy. He is obliged to leave such councils to be saved from Allah's punishment. He should not be prevented by the fear of loss of money, position, or the temporal enticements of this worldly life. Allah Almighty is more worthy of our fear and awe.

### **The Meaning of Befriending Nonbelievers**

These are some of the excerpts which indicate the apostasy of those who befriend disbelievers in Allah and those who accept partners with Him. What about the collection of these excerpts, and of others which are not mentioned, that indicate the contradictions between befriending the disbelievers with uttering the two testimonies! No one can say that the meaning of *mualah* (befriending, helping, protecting) is not fixed and defined since it

involves a number of things, meaning we can take it as a measure of knowledge as to who turns heretic and who does not. Almighty God does not forbid something which is not defined and unfamiliar. Allah does not judge a person, as an apostate, by vague and indistinguishable criteria, or His commands and prohibitions in that matter are absurd and cannot be applied. This cannot be pronounced by the believer about Allah and His Attributes.

If then it is asked what is meant by befriending the term in Arabic is derived from *walaa*, i.e. loyalty which means coming close to someone. It is something that stands in contrast to enmity; the loyal friend is the opposite of the enemy. The faithful people are loyal to the Merciful, while the nonbelievers are loyal to false deities or Satan. The first group are close to Allah by their obedience and worship, while the other are close to Satan by obeying him, avoiding Allah, and disobeying him.

Hence it is clear that friendship and loyalty to nonbelievers means gravitating toward them and showing affection in speech, deed, and intention. The excerpts have referred to such matters that lead people to be loyal to disbelievers.

Following the likes and dislikes of disbelievers is forbidden by God. The Qur'anic verse says: ***<<Never will the Jews nor the Christians be pleased with you till you follow their religion. Say: Verily, the guidance of Allah that is the (only) Guidance. And if you were to follow their desires after what you have received of Knowledge (i.e. the Qur'an), then you would have against Allah neither any protection or guardian nor any helper.>> (2:120)***

It also involves obeying them in what they command and advise. ***<<O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will send you back on your heels, and you will turn back (from faith)***

*as losers>> (3:149) <<And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been lost.>> (18:28) <<Eat not (O believers) of that (meat) on which Allah's name has not been pronounced (at the time of the slaughtering of the animal), for sure it is a sin and disobedience of Allah. And certainly, the devils do inspire their friends (from mankind) to dispute with you, and if you obey them (by making a dead animal legal by eating it), then you would indeed be polytheists: (because they made lawful to you to eat that which Allah has made unlawful to eat and you obeyed them by considering it lawful to eat, and by doing so you worshipped them, and to worship others besides Allah is polytheism).>> (6:121)*

Some verses refer to inclination towards nonbelievers. *<<And incline not toward those who do wrong, lest the Fire should touch you, and you have no protectors other than Allah, nor you would then be helped.>> (11:113)* To 'incline' here means to like and to be pleased with what they offer to the Muslim.

As to their cajolery, beguiling, and flattery on account of religion, the Almighty says: *<<They wish that you should compromise (in religion out of courtesy) with them, so they (too) would compromise.>> (68:9)*

And in showing affection towards them, God says: *<< You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even*

***though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred.>> (58:22)***

In addition to the above, showing hospitality to disbelievers; establishing close relationships with them, especially of rulers; seeking their advise in important matters; assembling with them; assisting them in injustice; imitating their deeds, habits, and customs; involving the community by means of allurements, threats, mass communication, etc. to emulate them in worldly affairs; borrowing their laws and methods in ruling the community and raising its citizenry are included in the meaning of befriending disbelievers.

There are other matters involved such as cooperating with them, plotting and planning with them, carrying out their schemes, joining their organizations and leagues, spying for them, transmitting the weak points of Muslims and the secrets of the nation to them, and fighting in their lines. It involves also trusting disbelievers, though God Almighty considers them treacherous, giving them high positions, granting them important and influential posts, especially in the army and other public services. It also includes improving their intellect, methods, values, and visions, calling for their ways and preferring their scholars.

Whoever adopts these matters or some of them in which they become his manner and habit, he has then the evidence against him that he accepts their blasphemy and becomes like them or even one of them. He is not rescued from blasphemy except by coming to faith anew and abandoning his friendship to heretics.

## **What Is Accepted and What Is Not Accepted of Excuses in This Context**

Some friends of nonbelievers may seek excuses in threat; they fear loss of their possessions, their wealth, and their positions, as well as other fears which are not proper and are not considered by Almighty God Who does not excuse them for such reasons. They are all the work of the Devil and his temptation, and out of love of the world and desire of its pleasures and attractions.

Almighty Allah does not accept any excuse from the friends of disbelievers who show obedience and acceptance of their religion, except in one case only, which is being forced to do so. In the Glorious Qur'an Allah says: *<<Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith—but such as open their breasts to disbelief,—on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment. That is because they loved and preferred the life of this world over the Hereafter. And Allah guides not the people who disbelieve.>> (16:106-107) <<Let not the believers take the disbelievers as supporters and helpers instead of the believers, and whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself, and to Allah is the final return.>> (3:28)*

Force, however, is futile when it comes to inner satisfaction and agreement of the heart with disbelievers, since this is not allowed: *<<...and his heart is at rest with faith>>* Since force has no power over hearts, the place of excuse is where force is effective which is uttering by the tongue and acting by the limbs. Whoever supports the disbeliever with his heart and affection towards them, he is a heretic in all cases. If he shows his support with his tongue

or action, he is treated in the world as a heretic and remains eternally in Hell in the second world. If he does not show his support by word or action and pretends to act according to Islam, his wealth and blood are saved, but he is a hypocrite who remains in the bottom of Hell.

### **The Limits of Considered Force**

But what are the limits of force which are meant here? Sheikh Al-Islam ibn Taymaha (may God have mercy on him) says:

I contemplated the religious sects and found that force differs according to the one who is forced. What is considered in the words of heresy is not the same as granting something and so forth. Ahmed stated in a number of places that to be forced to heresy is not possible except through prosecution by beating or by fetters. Words cannot be a means of force. He stated that if a woman grants her dowry to her husband, she can retract it unless she fears divorce or maltreatment from him. Therefore, he considered fear of divorce or bad cohabitation a means of force. Such things cannot be a force to heresy. If a captive is afraid the disbelievers might not allow him to marry or will separate him and his wife, he is not forced to utter heresy.

Thereupon, Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal whose views are accepted by Ibn Taymaha perceives that force as a pretense of heresy, whether it is by words or by supporting disbelievers, cannot be accepted unless it reaches the stage of prosecution, physical abuse, bloodshed, and so forth. What is less than that such as aspiration for leadership or position; out of fear or loss of wealth, children, or country; etc. is ineffectual and not accepted.

The conclusion is reiterated in the above excerpts which forbid the support of heretics and consider it one of the reasons of heresy and apostasy. In the verse following the one in which the Almighty gives as excuse for his heretic words, He states that love of this world and working for its fortune do not profit a person nor speak for him if he acts like a heretic. <<*That is because they loved and preferred the life of this world over the Hereafter. And Allah guides not the people who disbelieve.*>> (16:107) And in another verse, the Almighty threatens whoever takes his father or brother as a supporter instead of God: <<*O you who believe! Take not for supporters and helpers your fathers and your brothers if they prefer disbelief to Belief. And whoever of you does so, then he is one of the wrong-doers.*>> (9:23)

See how God denies blood relationship, however strong it is, to be an excuse in showing support for the heretics. If the love of a father, a brother, or a son is not an excuse to befriend or support nonbelievers, how could love for leadership, money, or the pleasure of life be so? To emphasize the point, God Almighty did not accept eight excuses usually given for what He and His Messenger (peace be unto him) like. <<*Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred; the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are rebellious to Allah.*>> (9:24)

No doubt, supporting the nonbelievers shows love and affection towards them and preference over the love of Allah, His Messenger (peace be unto him), and fighting for His cause. This is expressed in the following verse from the Qur'an: <<*You will not find any*



*people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred.>> (58:22)* There is no excuse then for any person to befriend disbelievers in fear of the loss of wealth, for his children, for spouses, kindred, and such causes which many people use as an excuse.

Look how the Almighty Maker refused to accept the excuse of people who used to befriend the Jews and Christians when they said they feared a misfortune would affect them. *<O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as 'Auliya (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but helpers to one another. And if any among you takes them as helpers, then surely he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are wrong-doers. And you see those in whose hearts there is a disease (of hypocrisy), they hurry to their friendship, saying: We fear lest some misfortune of disaster may befall us. Perhaps Allah may bring victory or a decision according to His will. Then they will become regretful for what they have been keeping as a secret in themselves.>> (5:51-52)*

This is the case of many apostates these days. How similar are the excuses of the heretics of the past to those of today's heretics! You find them taking the same excuse and fearing the loss of worldly fortune exactly like their predecessors. They say to you: 'How could we not support such a person or such a party, and how could we not show affection and flattery even if it were on account of religion and creed, since it enjoys the sympathy and protection of great states we cannot face?' Or they say: 'How could you ignore the wishes of such great countries, even if they wish to kill Muslims and scatter them, to corrupt their morals, to keep them away from their religion, and to give up their lands? How could we do that?

You know that we cannot stay in our posts for a moment if we do not satisfy their wishes. We cannot sacrifice our positions and our gains.'

Surely that is fear which is not allowed to be expressed to Almighty God and which, as you have learnt, makes a person blasphemous. Those people are double heretics; for their friendship and support of nonbelievers, and for worshipping them out of fear which should not be expressed except for Almighty Allah.

These excerpts and others illustrate that Almighty Allah does not excuse anyone who befriends and supports heretics except a person whose case is like 'Ammar ibn Yasser (may Allah be pleased with Yasser's people, for whom Allah revealed the excuse of being forced): <<...*except him who is forced and whose heart is at rest with faith.*>>

That requires that the forced person be under the power of disbelievers who can overpower him. The license then would be at the time of forcing, and he is not allowed to seek it after the removal of prosecution. If they return to prosecute him, he can go back to his license. It is transmitted that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him)said to 'Ammar after knowing his case:

...if they return to it (prosecution), go back.

Ibn Qadama said:

If it is proved that the forced person has not become a heretic, as soon as forcing is removed he has to reveal his faith in Islam. If he reveals it, he will remain a Muslim, and if he showed blasphemy he is considered a nonbeliever the

moment he utters it since it indicates his delight with blasphemy when he pronounces it willingly.<sup>1</sup>

What is best for the person who is forced to utter heresy or to support heretics and accept their faith is to be patient and not to obey their commands even if he suffers for that. Khubab has transmitted that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said:

Before this age they used to take a man, dig a hole for him and place him there, then bring a saw and put it on his head, dividing it into two. What is beyond his flesh and bones would be combed with iron combs, and that would not make him reject his faith.<sup>2</sup>

What illustrates and reinforces this is what is recounted in the *Sahih* Hadith of the people of *al-Okhdaod* and how they set ablaze the believers who endured patiently for the Cause of Allah. The ignited ditch did not force them to reject their rightful faith. They retained their faith and sacrificed themselves for it. This is the interpretation of Allah's words: <<***Cursed were the people of the ditch. Fire supplied with fuel, when they sat by it (fire), And they witnessed what they were doing against the believers (i.e. burning them).***>> (85:4 to 7)

Imam Al-Qurturby (may Allah be pleased with him)said that scholars have a consensus that whoever was forced to turn to blasphemy and instead chose death will be more rewarded by God than the one who chose the license.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Mughny*, vol.9, p 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Reyad as-Saliheen*, p 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Qurturby's Interpretation*, vol.1, p 188.

## Some Aspects of Dissatisfaction with Islam

We will mention two aspects of abhorrence with Islam that can lead a person to apostasy, even after professing the two testimonies and calling himself a Muslim.

The first is mocking a known matter in Islam, which may involve mocking Allah, His Messenger, His Books, or the believers because of their faith, and so on. The origin of such is stated: <<*The hypocrites fear lest a surah should be revealed about them, showing them what is in their hearts. Say: (Go ahead and) mock! But certainly Allah will bring to light all that you fear. If you ask them, they declare: We were only talking idly and joking. Say: Was it at Allah and His proofs and His Messenger that you were mocking?*>> (9:64-65)

The occasion of the revelation of these verses is that a man in the Battle of Tabuk said:

We have never seen a more ravenous people, nor more liars and cowards at meeting the enemy than these reciters—meaning the Prophet (peace be unto him) and his fellow reciters. 'Auf ibn Malik said: This is a lie, but you are a hypocrite. I shall report you to Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him). 'Auf then went to the Messenger of God to tell him, but found the Qur'anic verses on the subject preceding him. The men came to Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) and said: O Messenger, we were merely indulging into the subject, playing , and talking nonsense to pass the time while riding. Ibn Umar said: He seemed as if he was hanging onto the tail of the camel of God's Messenger (peace be unto him) and the stones were hitting his feet when he said: We punned and played. Then the Messenger of Allah told him : Was it at Allah, and His

verses, and His Messenger that you were mocking? He said that without turning to the man, and did not add anything else.<sup>1</sup>

There are innumerable examples that all discuss disparaging and dissatisfaction with religion or with part of it, which could be expressed by words; action; and gesticulation, such as winking the eye, sticking out the tongue, pursing the lips, or nudging the arm at the recitation of Allah's Book, the transmission of the Messenger's Traditions, at the mention of the Islamic Creed, or part of its known principles, etc.

The second aspect of dissatisfaction is showing abhorrence and anger at any reference to Allah, His Messenger (peace be unto him), the recitation of His Book, or at the mention of some of the known matters of religion or the call to faith. <<*And when Our Clear Verses are recited to them, you will notice a denial on the faces of the disbelievers! They are nearly ready to attack with violence those who recite Our Verses to them. Say: Shall I tell of something worse than that? The Fire (of Hell) which Allah has promised to those who disbelieve, and worst indeed is that destination.>> (22:72) <<That is because they hate that which Allah has sent down (this Qur'an and Islamic laws, etc.), so He has made their deeds fruitless.>> (47:9)*

### **The Cause of Apostasy from the Texts of Some Scholars**

It is worthwhile at the conclusion of this investigation to point out some scholarly texts illustrating some deeds, remarks, and beliefs that lead the person to abandon the religion of Islam, which the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibn Katheer's Interpretation*, vol.2, p 367.

reader can familiarize himself with in order not succumb to them. Warnings should also be issued to his fellow brothers in danger of yielding. What is mentioned is mostly agreed upon, and what they differed on is no less than a great transgression.

In the book of *Zawajir (Warnings Against Committing the Major Sins)*, Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haythamy said:

Of the types of blasphemy and ascription of partners to Allah is to intend it for a long or a near time, or associate it with his tongue or heart with something, even if it were impossible logically. He becomes a heretic at once. He could believe, do, or utter what turns him into a nonbeliever, whether his act was as a result of a conviction, obstinacy, or mockery, such as presuming the pre-existence of the world (before being created by Allah), or negating what is confirmed through the consensus of opinion about religion, such as denying the knowledge or power of Allah, or His knowledge of the particular, or confirming what is negated about Him, as colour for instance.

He then started to give many details to the main rule mentioned. He said: To sum up, whoever does an act on which the consensus of Muslims believe should not be performed except by a heretic even if he had declared belief in Islam, such as going to Church with Christians, wearing the garb of differing religions, etc., or throwing paper that contains some verse of the Qur'an or the name Allah into the garbage indicates heresy. Heresy could also be manifested as doubt in one of the accepted prophets; the Torah, the Bible, David's Psalms, or Abraham's Books being one of the revealed Books revelation; or in an accepted verse in the Qur'an. It could be in saying any blasphemy to misguide the community or to turn the

Companions into heretics; uttering blasphemy about Makkah, the Ka`aba, the Sacred Mosque; belittling the people of the *Hajj* or their known attire; or disparaging fasting and praying. It could also be the act of turning something prohibited into a lawful thing such as praying without ablution, hurting a Muslim or one of the people of the revealed religions without a legal writ, or forbidding something lawful such as commerce or marriage. It could be an incorrect declaration of Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) such as he was black; died before growing his beard; or was not from the Quraish, an Arab, or a human being. This is because describing him without giving him his attributes is considered a refutation. It is also understood that denying any confirmed attribute is considered blasphemous exactly as considering there being another prophet after Muhammad (peace be unto him). It could be in claiming prophethood can be acquired or reached by purity of heart. It could be by disparaging the Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him), as well as other prophets, and the angels. It could be in insulting, belittling, or mocking the Prophet, or imputing imperfections in his character, family lineage, religion, and actions, or insinuating some such thing. It could be abusing him through scorn, disparagement, or indifference; or wishing humiliation for him; attributing something unworthy to him through condemnation; talking nonsense about him; or reviling him for some crisis or calamity that happened to him. Blasphemy has then been committed by one of the above mentioned deeds. Repentance is not accepted according to most scholars and he should be killed. Khalid ibn al-Walid (may Allah be please with him) killed a man who said: At your friend's. He considered such an appellation belittling to the Messenger (peace be unto him).

Ibn Hajar added:

Other causes that can turn a person into a blasphemer are: if he accepts blasphemy even in an implied manner such as advising a disbeliever not to believe, even though he is not consulted; urging another to blasphemy because he accepted it; accusing a Muslim of being a disbeliever without an explanation because he considers Islam a heretic religion; making fun of Allah's name or His prophet by belittling him; or mocking Allah's command, His Prophet, His promise, or menace. It is heresy to say: 'If He commands me to do such and such a thing, I would not do it,' or 'If He made the direction of prayers at that side, I would not have prayed,' or 'If He granted me the Garden of Paradise I would not go out of obstinacy,' or 'If He punished me for leaving my prayers in spite of my illness He would be unjust to me.' It is also heresy to state: 'That prosecution is through Allah's predestination,' or 'I act without Allah's predestination,' or 'If a king or a Prophet witnessed the truth about Islam, I would not believe him,' or 'If such a person were a prophet, I would not believe him,' or 'If what the Prophet said were never true we are saved,' or if he is asked to get his nails cut because it is *Sunnah*, he would say in a sarcastic way: 'I will not do that even if it were a *Sunnah*,' or 'There is no power or strength if God does not satisfy your hunger,' and so forth concerning other reminders of Allah. The same applies if the caller to prayer is accused of lying about prayer time, his voice is likened to 'the bell of blasphemy', jests are made of the call to prayers, Allah's name is applied to someone out of mockery, or the Day of Judgment is mocked. If it is said about God that He cannot follow the robber, attributing the impotence to God; or attributing injustice to God for forbidding things; or if the costume of a nonbeliever is



donned to indicate inclination toward the nonbeliever's conviction; or if it is claimed the Jews are better than the Muslims, it is blasphemy. Moreover, if a person is asked: 'What is faith?' and he answered: 'I do not know' out of mockery, or denied the company of Abu Bakr, or insulted Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), he is a refuter of the Qur'an as well as other things. It is also considered blasphemous if he claims to be Allah, even though it was in humor; or says he does not know Allah's rights, in an attempt to deny his duties; or if it is jokingly stated that one is overfilled with the Qur'an, prayer, mentioning God's name, or so forth; or he states with incredulity: 'What is the Day of Judgment or Hell?' Also it is wrong to say: 'May Allah damn every scholar' if he meant absorption as this includes prophets and angels; or 'What kind of legislation is that?' and meant to mock it.

In addition to the above, a person becomes blasphemous if he states: 'When the Divinity appears, slavery is abolished,' and meant to abolish all rules of religion; or that he can see God in this life with his eyes or speak to Him orally; or that Allah is represented in some good images; or that He is no longer God; or if he says: 'A slave may approach Allah through other means than worshipping,' or says: 'The spirit is part of Allah's light, so if light is connected with light, it is united.'<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the meaning of the Qur'anic verse: *<<Verily, We did send down the Torah (to Moses), therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah's Will, judged the Jews. And the Rabbis and the priests (too) judged the*

<sup>1</sup> See Ibn Hajar al-Makki, *Book of al-Zawajir*.

***Jews by the Torah after those Prophets) for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men but fear Me and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.>> (5:44) Ibn Taymaya (may Allah have mercy on him) said:***

No doubt, whoever does not believe it is obligatory to follow what is revealed by Allah to His Messenger (peace be unto him), he is a disbeliever. No nation but commands to rule by justice which can be in its religion according to what is seen by the nation's seniors. Many of them are linked to Islam, but they rule according to the customs that are not revealed by Allah like their Bedouin ancestors. They think they ought to abide by those customs not by the Qur'an and the Traditions. That is blasphemy. Many people have embraced Islam, but still rule by the current conventions used to command people, who obey (i.e. out of loyalty to government authority). To rule except through what is revealed by Allah and to adhere to it, and making something unlawful lawful is considered blasphemous.<sup>1</sup>

The interpreter of the *Tahawiyah Creed* says about the same topic:

There is a matter here that ought to be observed which is, that ruling with what is not revealed by Allah might be a blasphemy carried through the faith, according to the ruler's attitude. If he believes that ruling according to what is revealed by Allah is not obligatory and that he had a choice in it, and if he disregarded it knowing it to be revealed by Allah, that would be blasphemy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tawheed Collection*, p 193.

<sup>2</sup> *The Interpretation of the Tahawiyah Creed*, pp.363-364.

Al-Hafiz ibn Katheer says about the interpretation of the Qur'anic verse: <<*Do they then seek the judgement of (the days of) Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allah for a people who have firm faith.*>> (5:50)

Almighty Allah denies whoever abandons His just rule which contains all good things and forbids all evil, and who wavers between Allah's rule and other opinions, whims, and terms set by men without warrant from Allah's law, as the pre-Islamic pagans, who ruled according to their own views and desires. This kind of rule is like the rule of the Tartars and their kingly policies taken after their king Genghis Khan who wrote the *Yaseq Book* that compiles a collection of rules quoted from various faiths, e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islamic, etc. Many of the rules were taken arbitrarily from his own views and vagaries. Its legislation was followed by his sons and was preferred to Allah's Glorious Book and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (peace be unto him) in ruling the country. Whoever follows such practices is heretical and should be fought against in order to return to the rule of Allah and His Messenger (peace be unto him). they should not rule by any other law in major or minor issues.<sup>1</sup>

Sheikh Ahmed Shaker commenting on the above interpretation of Ibn Katheer stated that:

I say, is it possible, in spite of that, according to Allah's legislation, for Muslims to be ruled in their countries according to laws taken from pagan and heathen Europe? Or more properly, should they be ruled by legislation in which personalized incorrect views and vagaries are

<sup>1</sup> *Ibn Katheer's Interpretation*, vol.2, p 67.

interjected that change and alter the law with the legislator not caring whether it agrees with the Islamic law or not"

Muslims were not afflicted, as we know from their history, except at the time of the Tartars, which was the worst age of injustice and darkness. However, they did not yield and the Islamic nation conquered the Tartars then intermixed them resulting in mass conversions to the faith. The effect of what they did was removed by the tenacity and steadfastness of Muslims in their faith and laws. As the corrupt and unjust rule was a result of the ruling party at that time, none of the ruled Islamic nations adopted it, learned it, nor taught it to their children. So, it was soon removed.

Have you heard the powerful description of Al-Hafiz ibn Katheer, who wrote in the eighth century, concerning the local law created by Genghis Khan, the enemy of Islam? Do not you see him describing the condition of Muslims in this age in the fourteenth century? There is only one difference which has already been mentioned. What happened in terms of anti-Islamic legislation occurred among a certain class of rulers, and because of that was swept away quickly by time, and was incorporated into the general Islamic body so the effect was soon removed.

Now Muslims are immersed in worse conditions and undergo even more injustice and darkness because most Islamic nations are ruled by foreign legislation and anti-Islamic laws, similar to the *Yaseq* rules, put together by a heretics whose heresy is quite apparent. Such laws are created by people ascribed to Islam and then are learned by Muslim children who become proud of that heritage along with their parents. Then they base their affairs on that false heritage and follow those who have embraced that mode of legislation flouting, at the same time, those who act differently, calling those who ask them to adhere to their Islamic faith and

legislation as backward and rigid and other such pejorative names and expressions.

Moreover, what remained of the Islamic legislation has been interfered with and corrupted under their rule. A new *Yaseq* is being implemented gradually sometimes using clemency, cunning, and deceit. Whatever power that is available is used with shameless declarations that the work is to separate religion from the state. Is it possible then for any Muslim to embrace this new faith, or this new legislation?

Is it possible for a Muslim then, to trust the judiciary system under the patronage of this 'contemporary *Yaseq*' to follow it and at the expense of rejecting the remarkable Islamic legislation? I do not believe that any Muslim who understands his religion as a detailed whole, and who believes that this Qur'an is revealed by God to His Messenger (peace be unto him), as a secure Book uncorrupted by any evil from anywhere, and that he is obliged to obey Allah's words and His Messenger under all circumstances, would be able but to affirm without any hesitation or prejudice, that the judiciary power in this case is basically false, incorrigible, and not allowed!

The situation in such conventional, man-made laws is as clear as the sun. It is clear-cut blasphemy without any concealment or camouflage. There is no excuse for any person belonging to Islam, whoever he is, to follow, submit, or profess it. Every person has to be cautious, as everyone is his own reckoner.<sup>1</sup>

Sheikh Ahmed Shaker also says about those who deny the Islamic law of theft:

<sup>1</sup> *'Omdat al-Tafseer*, vol.4, pp.171-172.

That is Allah's verdict concerning a thief, whether a man or a woman. It is decisive, clear in words and meaning, and cannot be doubted in its authentication and illustration. There is also the verdict of Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him), carrying out the judgement of Allah and in obedience to His command regarding both men and women. The cutting of the hand is such a certain verdict that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said: If Fatima bint Muhammad committed a theft, I would cut her hand off.

But look at what our enemies, the missionaries, and the imperialists have done to us? They have toyed with our religion and imposed on us accursed pagan laws, invalidating Allah's sagacity and that of His Messenger (peace be unto him). Then people among us were raised antithetical to us. They were raised to detest the Islamic rule. They forced their lips to pronounce the blasphemous words: That is a ruthless verdict which does not suit our prudent age, the age of torn civilization. This verdict has been made the topic of mockery and laughter. As a result, the prisons are filled, not only in our countries, with hundred of thousands of thieves because of the anti-Islamic laws of theft that, broken with impunity, will never be deterrent. It will never cure that purchased foreign disease.

Furthermore, the minds of the cultured class are filled, especially those in charge of pagan laws, with what they call 'psychology', which is neither a science nor has it any relation to it. It is made up of contradictory and contrary inclinations. Each of the leaders of blasphemy in this science has an opinion which contradicts that of his contender. In the application of these anti-Islamic laws, an excuse is found, in the study of the psychology, for every thief, which in turn is given reasons for not imprisoning him. Their defenders stand up for them in such a manner which can send them to Hell. They know that it is a terrible crime and they do not deny

it, however they attempt to underrate it by studying the psychology and the circumstances of the criminal.

I have argued with a number of their experts and they all come to the conclusion that the verdict of the Qur'an does not suit our age! And that the criminal is but a patient who has to be treated and not punished. They forget Allah's words about that verdict: **<<Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.>>** (5:38) This is a punishment to set an example to thieves, and it is a clear and open statement. How these people have strayed.

The case for us as Muslims is in the core of our creed, and is an essential part of our faith. Those who accept Islam yet who deny the law of cutting the hand or who opt against it will be asked: 'Do you believe in Allah, and that He originated the Creation?' They will say: 'Yes.' 'Do you believe that He knows what happened and what is going to happen, and that He know more about His creation than they know about themselves and about what is useful or harmful to them?' They will say: 'Yes.' 'Do you believe that He sent His Messenger Muhammad (peace be unto him) with guidance and the faith of truth; that the Qur'an was revealed to him from God to guide people and set them right of this world and the next?' They will say: 'We do.' 'Do you believe in this particular verse from the Qur'an: **<<Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.>>**' (5:38) They will say: 'Yes we do.' 'Then why do you abandon it?' 'On which law do you depend?' Whoever answers the former questions with 'no', we

have nothing to do with him, and we know his destination. Every Muslim, whether learned or ignorant, cultured or illiterate, knows for sure that any person who says 'no' to these questions is outside of Islam and dies in the heated fire of apostasy. As to non-Muslims, or those against Islam, we are going to argue with them about it, since they have not believed as we have, and will never accept what we say except when we repeat their convictions. God forbid.

If those people against Islam used their minds, they would learn that if a few hands of thieves were cut off every year, the country would be saved from the multitudes of thieves, and there would be only a few thefts a year, like rare things. Prisons would be vacated of hundred of thousands who actually make prisons schools to plan crimes. If they were wise, they would do it. But they insist on their wrong assumption to please their masters and teachers. So, it is out of the question.

Of the legal opinions of Muslims scholars about some apostate sects, here in Ibn Taymāya's answer concerning one of such sects called *al-Nassereya*, he said:

Thanks be to Allah, the God of the two worlds. Those folk called *al-Nassereya* are as well as other types such as *al-Qramitah* and *al-Bateneyah* are more blasphemous than the Jews and Christians. They are even more blasphemous than those who take partners with God, and their harm on Mohammed's nation is greater than the harm of the heretic fighters such as the Tartars, Europeans, etc. They pretend to ignorant Muslims that they follow the Islamic law and support the 'People of the House' (Prophet's Household), yet in truth they do not believe in God, His Messenger, His Book, or in any command or prohibition. They do not believe in reward and punishment,



in Heaven and Hell, or in any Messengers before Muhammad (peace be unto him), nor in any of the pre-Islamic religions. They merely take the words of Allah and of His Messengers known by scholars and interpret them according to matters they invent. They claim it is the science of what is hidden and internal. They have no limits to their atheism as to what they claim of Allah's names, His verses and proofs, and the corruption of the words of God to mean something different. They favour the Christians to Muslims. The most unfortunate thing that happened to them, in their view, was the victory of the Muslims over the Tartars. Their best feasts would be if Christians captured Muslim ports, Allah forbid. Those against Allah and His Messenger (peace be unto him) were too many at that time on the coasts and other places, so Christians were able to capture the coast. Because of such people as well, they captured the sacred city of Jerusalem and other places. When God sent Muslim kings who fought fervently for the Cause of Allah such as Al Nur ad-Din al-Shaheed and Salah ad-Din and their followers, they invaded the coasts and restored them from the Christians and others; they also invaded the land of Egypt which was taken for two hundred years. The heretics had made an agreement with Christians and were fought by Muslims who conquered the land.

Furthermore, the Tartars would not have invaded the Islamic countries and captured Baghdad and killed the Caliph and other Muslim kings without their cooperation and support.

They have known titles known to Muslims. Sometimes they are called *al-Malaheds*, sometimes *al-Qarameta*, or sometimes *al-Bateneyah*, *al-Ismaeleya*, and

others. Some of these names refer to them all, while others refer to certain groups. No doubt that fighting such sects and holding the Islamic law against them are of the greatest tasks for Muslims. It is preferred to fighting the people of the Book and those who take partners than to fight Muslims. It is similar to fighting the apostates. Abu Bakr al-Seddiq and the other Companions began fighting the heretics of the people of the Book. Moreover, their harm on the Muslims is greater than that of the heretics. Every Muslim should do that according to his ability. No one is allowed to conceal the information he knows about them, but he has to reveal it and spread it so that Muslims can comprehend the reality of their situation. No one can be quiet about standing against them according to the commands of Allah and His Messenger (peace be unto him). The person who helps in stopping their evil and guiding them as much as possible has a great reward and recompense unknown except to Almighty Allah.

### **Precaution in Considering Those People as Blasphemous**

The interpreter of the *Tahawiyah Creed* says:

Invented, corrupt, and false speech which implies the negation of what is confirmed by the Messenger, or confirming what is negated, or commanding what he prohibited, or prohibiting what he commanded, has to be faced with truth; in addition, the threat promised in the texts has to be proved, by revealing it as blasphemous. One should say: 'Whoever said it is blasphemous,' and so forth. But if they say about the person concerned: 'Do you witness that he is of the people threatened and that he is blasphemous?' That we should not witness unless there is a

matter that allows the testimony. It is of the greatest injustice to testify that Allah will not forgive or be merciful to a certain person but will keep him eternally in Hell. This is the verdict of the disbeliever after his death. Since the particular person can be a hardworking forgiven sinner, he could be one who did not know the meaning of the texts, or he might have great faith and good deeds that caused the mercy of God, as He forgave the one who said, 'If I died, crush me and scatter me.' He was forgiven by Allah for fearing Him.

However, that resistance in the issue of the Day of Judgment does not prevent us from punishing him in life to stop his heresy and to ask him to repent. If he does not repent, he should be killed. If the speech itself is heresy, we have to say so and the pronouncer of it becomes a heretic according to certain conditions and negation of hindrances...

It is understood from such a discussion that one has to be cautious when considering certain persons as heretic. There are some important factors which have to be taken into consideration while talking about the causes that negate Islam.

The first factor is that there are several matters which contradict the two testimonies, either for its negation of faith in Allah, or its denial to believe in the Messenger of Allah and what is revealed through him. Everyone who knows these matters and knows what proves them from the texts should draw people's attention to them and warn them. One should distinguish between their types and their terms with as much knowledge as he possesses. He should give illustrations from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. This is part of explaining religion, commanding what is good, and forbidding what is evil.

The person who performs this has his recompense and reward by Allah if he is sincere.

The second factor is that the matters that turn people to heresy differ in indicating the extent of heresy. Some of them refer to heresy openly not to part of it, while others indicate heresy in certain parts not openly. As to the second type, sometimes the requirements could be easily understood, sometimes not so easily. Whoever falls within the first type, could be testified against with heresy, and no one can be excused except the forced one as explained above, provided it is only uttered by the tongue without any real conviction. It is the same with a similar part of the second type, as the person who claims to be a god, which necessitates partnership with Allah Almighty, even though he did not negate Divinity to Allah. It is the same with the person who claims some divine attributes as the right to make things lawful and forbid things to worshippers. It is the same with the person who believes that the world always existed; this requires him to say that Allah did not create it, as there is no other interpretation of it. In its strength it is like open heresy, and its pronouncer cannot be excused. It is the same with the one who declares open satisfaction with heresy, as the person who might say to the one who denies Allah's existence: 'You are right.' This is no less in indicating heresy than the words of the denier himself. The strength of it might be due to the repeated acts and utterances of heresy from a certain person and his dwelling on them. A strong indication of heresy might also come when a person keeps on supporting and befriending disbelievers since it is impossible, according to conventions, to find an excuse for a person who continues all his life, or most of it in satisfaction with it. In addition, the person who falls into what leads to heresy through looking into what necessitated it, is required to be cautious about it when applying it to a certain person. Precaution is more needed whenever the causing matter is distanced from the particular

person. This is done by considering the circumstances, overwhelming evidence, and apparent connections.

This matter cannot be accessible in fact to the public, but has to be performed by those who have the means of jurists and judiciary power in the Islamic state.

We give an example here. If a person threw some Qur'anic text in a filthy place, whoever the doer is must be warned because this action has a consensus from scholars that it can turn to blasphemy since it necessitates belittling and scorning the words of God. If another person sees him, he has to tell him that it is blasphemous to do so. However, he cannot consider that particular person who did the act as a disbeliever unless he learns at least two important matters. First, that the person knew that what he threw away was the Qur'an and knew that he threw it in a filthy or impure place. If he knew his indiscretion by professing it for instance, the verdict would be heresy. However, the person might be illiterate who did not know what he threw away, or he might be blind who did not see what he threw away and did not know where he threw it. This would be a clear proof of the absence of the wish to belittle or scorn, and the particular person would be excused.

Therefore, one has to be cautious in considering such or such a person heretic unless he does what can be considered open heresy which has no other interpretation. It is obligatory however to draw attention to all utterances and deeds that necessitate heresy if certain conditions are fulfilled and others negated.

The third factor is that there are two verdicts which are based on the worshipper's heresy. The first one is worldly, which is that the apostate deserves in life every verdict indicated in the legal texts which has to be applied to him in this world. It is based on what a

person outwardly reveals without probing into the inner selves, like the judgement of the apostate to be killed if he does not repent; the separation between him and his wife, not considering his slaughtering of an animal or his marriage as lawful, etc. These things concern human beings in this world and have to be applied to the concerned person. Some of these verdicts are the affairs of the *Imam*, or leader, especially regarding repentance and death.

The second verdict comes on the Day of Judgment. It is the judgement of the apostate to remain eternally in Hellfire. This verdict is issued and carried out on such and such a person, of the people who deserve it by Almighty Allah, the Most Wise of all Judges. We cannot carry that out in our worldly life, nor can we be certain about it with reference to a particular person. It does not concern human beings in the first place. No one in this world can claim that he knows the place of a particular person in the Garden of Paradise, or in Hell, unless it is revealed to him by Allah as He revealed to some of His Messengers, as when the Messenger of Allah enunciated the reward of Paradise to his ten Companions, or like those proclaimed in His Book, or those declared to be of the people of Hell by the Prophet (peace be unto him) such as Abu Lahab as revealed in the Qur'an.

We have the right now to give an overall account. We can say whoever disbelieves in Allah or retracts from faith to apostasy, he remains eternally in the Fire of Hell and is forbidden Paradise. This is the limit a Muslim has to stop at, or he would be considered ruthless and aggressive, as the interpreter of the *Tahawiyah Creed* explained above, and as Tahawy (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

We should not place anyone of them in Paradise or Hell.

## **Concluding Remarks about the Verdict Concerning the People Committing Sins**

Committing sins by itself does not lead to the loss of faith, as stated previously. At-Tahawy (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

We do not consider any of the people who turn their faces to Allah in prayer as disbelievers simply for committing a sin, unless the person makes it his lawful right. On the other hand, we do not say there is no harm in committing an offense for a man who has faith.

Imam An-Nawawy (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

Know that people who follow the Prophetic Traditions and the righteous people of both predecessors and successors consider those who die believing in one God will surely go to Paradise in any case. If he were exempted from sin, as the young, the insane, or the one whose insanity continued till his maturity; if one has repented from associating others with Allah or from other sins; if one does not revert to sin after repentance; in addition to those who have succeeded in following Allah's commands and who have not committed any sins at all, all of them will be admitted to Paradise and will not go to Hell. They will only pass by it, contrary to what is known. What is correct is that it means passing through the Bridge (*as-siraat*) which is erected over the back of Hell, may Allah protect us from it and from other evils. As to the sinner who dies before repenting, his fate is in the hands and the will of Allah, which means that Allah could forgive him and admit him into Paradise and consider him of the first division,

according to His will. Allah could also, if He willed, punish him, according to His measure, and then admit him to Paradise, so no one who believes in the Oneness of Allah will stay eternally in Hell, even if he committed a number of sins. In the same way, none is admitted to Paradise who dies disbelieving in Allah, even if he has done so many good deeds. This is a comprehensive summary of the view of the righteous people concerning this issue. The illustrations of the people in the (Islamic *ummah*) nation have all shown such rules. Thus, there are numerous texts which demonstrate this fact based on unequivocal knowledge. With such a rule established, all Traditions included in this chapter<sup>1</sup> and others can be interpreted correctly and accordingly. If a Tradition is mentioned revealing an apparent disagreement with it, it should be interpreted in that light to be in agreement with the legislative texts.<sup>2</sup>

Whoever dies while believing in Allah and his heart is in sincere support of the two testimonies, his destiny is admittance into Paradise and he will not remain eternally in Hell whatever the sins he committed, as long as he did not make them his lawful right or deny a well-known religious matter, or commit what leads to the annulment of the two testimonies, as already clarified in respect to different causes. The mere doing of the sin does not annul the two testimonies nor can it be a reason for remaining in Hell forever.

Many Prophetic Traditions illustrate the truth of this. They declare that Paradise is the destiny of everyone who utters the two

<sup>1</sup> It is the part entitled by An-Nawawy as '*Bab*' (the proof that the person who dies believing in the Oneness of Allah will surely be admitted into Paradise.)

<sup>2</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol., p 218.



testimonies sincerely from his heart as they signify the Oneness of Allah, and belief in His Messenger (peace be unto him) and in everything he said. Some of these Traditions declare that sins, both minor and major, do not prevent a person from admittance in Paradise ultimately, though a Muslim may be punished for his sins. Here are a few of the Prophetic Traditions:

1. On the authority of `Uthman (may Allah have mercy on him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him) said: Whoever dies while he knows there is no other god but Allah is admitted into Paradise.<sup>1</sup>
2. On the authority of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him) said: I testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am God's Messenger—God will not encounter a worshipper who is in doubt of these words but He admits him into Paradise.<sup>2</sup>
3. On the authority of `Ebadah ibn as-Samet (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him) said: (A person) who declared: I testify that there is no god but Allah, who has no associate, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger, and that Jesus is God's slave and the son of His slave-woman, (at the command of) His word given to Mary and a spirit of His, that Paradise is true and so is Hell, would be admitted by Allah to Paradise through any of its eight gates, according to His wish. In another narration: He would be admitted in Paradise for His past deeds.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol., p 218.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p 224.

<sup>3</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.1, p 227; and Al-Bukhari, *The Prophet's Sayings*.

4. On the authority of Al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Mutaleb (may Allah be pleased with him) who heard Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) say: The one who accepted Allah as God, Islam as a religion, and Muhammad as His Messenger will taste the flavour of faith.<sup>1</sup>
5. The Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him) said: The people of Paradise will be admitted into Paradise and those of Hell into Hell, then Allah Almighty will say: Let those who have an atom of faith in their hearts come out of Hell.<sup>2</sup>
6. On the authority of Al-Ma'rur ibn Swaid who said: I heard Abu Dhar talking about the Prophet (peace be unto him) who said: Gabriel (may peace be upon him) came to me heralding me that the person who dies belonging to your nation, worshipping none but one God will be admitted into Paradise. I said: But if he committed adultery and if he stole? He said: Even if he committed adultery and if he stole.<sup>3</sup>

Imam An-Nawawy said in his interpretation of that saying in the Prophetic Traditions:

As to his judgement (peace be unto him) concerning the one who died believing in more than one god and who is admitted in Hell, and the one who died believing in one God and admitted in Paradise, the Muslim scholars have agreed upon it. As to the admittance of the one who believed in more than one god and is admitted into Hell, it is generally

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, p 2.

<sup>2</sup> Agreed upon. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.1, p 61; An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.3, p 36.

<sup>3</sup> Agreed upon. *Sahih Muslim*, vol.6, p 94.; and *Sahih al-Bukhari 'Book of Funerals'*.

known that he is admitted there and will remain there forever without any difference between a Muslim, a Jew, a Christian, an idol-worshipper, and the rest of the nonbelievers. There is no difference for the righteous people between the one who disbelieves out of obstinacy and others, nor between the one who stood against Islam and the one who was attached to it, and then he became a disbeliever by his denial and other things. As to the admittance in Paradise of the one who died believing in one God, it is a true fact, if he had not committed a major sin which he persisted in till his death, he will be at Allah's will. If Allah forgives him he will be admitted to Paradise, otherwise he will be punished first, then he will be taken out of Hell into Paradise where he will remain forever. As to the Prophet's details of committing adultery and stealing, it is an illustration to the people who follow the footsteps of the Traditions that those who committed the sins are not with certainty admitted in Hell, and if they were, they will come out of it ending the second life eternally in Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

As to the Prophetic Traditions mentioned above by Al-Nawawy, he says:

If one of the Traditions is mentioned revealing an apparent disagreement, i.e. the previous rule, it should be interpreted according to such rule, in order to link the texts of Islamic law.

These texts are of various types. One type of them shows an apparent negation of faith for those who committed some forbidden acts. Another type reveals the Prophet's renunciation of those who committed some of the forbidden acts. Still another considers some

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy. *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, p 97.

offenses as heresy and a form of polytheism.<sup>1</sup> Here are some of those Traditions. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

1. To insult a Muslim is immoral, and to fight him is heresy.<sup>2</sup>
2. Do not go back after my death to paganism by killing one another.<sup>3</sup>
3. He who swears by other than Allah is a polytheist.<sup>4</sup>
4. Two types of people have heresy in them, those who accuse others of misbegotten children and those who wail over the dead.<sup>5</sup>
5. The adulterer does not commit adultery when he is a believer, and the thief does not steal when he is a believer, and one cannot drink alcohol when he is a believer, and repentance is still open.<sup>6</sup>
6. Those who raise their weapons upon us are not of us, and those who cheat us are not of us.<sup>7</sup>
7. Not of us are those who slapped their faces or tore up their clothes or wailed in the pre-Islamic way.<sup>8</sup>

There are similar Traditions to these, but the only people who took them literally were the *khawarej* sect who considered the one who committed a major sin a heretic. As to the followers of the *Sunnah*,

<sup>1</sup> Abu 'Ubeid al-Qassem ibn Salam, *A Letter of Faith*, p 84; and others.

<sup>2</sup> Agreed upon. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.1, p 96; An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, p 54.

<sup>3</sup> Agreed upon. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.1, p 175; An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, p 55.

<sup>4</sup> Narrated by Ahmed, At-Tirmidhi, and Al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadrak* on the authority of Ibn 'Umar. *Al-Fath al-Rabbani*, vol.14, pp.164-166; and *Sahih al-Tirmidhi* (with Al-'Araby's interpretation), vol.3, p 18; and *Al-Mustadrak*, vol.1, p 18.

<sup>5</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*. vol.2, p 57.

<sup>6</sup> Agreed upon. An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, p 45.

<sup>7</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*. vol.2, p 108.

<sup>8</sup> Agreed upon. *Sahih al-Bukhari 'Funerals'*; and An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, p 109.

their attitude towards all these denotes what agrees with the previous rule. This attitude is the mutual part shared between them, but their methods of interpretation are different. Some of them explained that what was meant is annulling the blessing and not the heresy that negates faith; while others interpreted it in the sense that it meant to be strict and to terrify. Some interpreted it to mean making a lawful right of what is mentioned of sins, while heresy associated with people of sin remains as it is. Anyone who makes his lawful right, what is mentioned as wrongful in these Traditions, is considered a disbeliever and apostate. Some have followed another track and interpreted each Prophetic Tradition in a way that agrees with the above rule followed by people of the *Summah*, which is that those who commit major sins do not stay in Hell. Therefore, the interpreters did not follow a general comprehensive interpretation for these Traditions (sayings of the Prophet). Some said in their interpretations that they meant to reveal the deeds and sayings which are the fruit of heresy, not the fruit of faith; and that faith does not require such things but demands avoidance of them.<sup>1</sup>

Imam Abu 'Ubeid al-Qasem ibn Salam (may Allah have mercy on him) says after mentioning the above interpretations and their weaknesses:

What we have in this chapter is that sin and offenses do not annul faith nor necessitate heresy, but they negate the truth of faith and its purity which are attributed by Allah to people of faith and put as a condition in a number of places in His Book. <<*Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for the price that theirs shall be the Paradise. They fight in Allah's Cause, so they kill (others) and are killed. It is a promise in truth*

<sup>1</sup> Abu 'Ubeid al-Qasem ibn Salam, *A Message of Faith*, pp.84.

*which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded. That is the supreme success. (The believers whose lives Allah has purchased are) those who repent to Allah, who worship Him, who praise Him, who fast, who bow down (in prayer), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin all that Islam has ordained and forbid all Islam forbids, and who observe the limits set by Allah. And give glad tidings to the believers.>> (9:111-112) <<Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their prayers with all solemnity and full submissiveness. And those who turn away from evil talk. And those who pay the Zakat. And those who guard their chastity except from their wives or that their right hands possess,--for then, they are free from blame; but whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors. Those who are faithful to their covenants; and those who strictly guard their prayers. These are the inheritors, who will inherit Paradise. They will dwell therein forever.>> (23:1 to 11) <<The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses are recited unto them, they increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone), who offer prayers perfectly and spend out of that We have provided them. It is they who are the believers in truth. For them are grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness and a generous provision (Paradise).>> (8:2 to 4)*

Abu 'Ubeid says:

These verses explained and revealed Allah's laws that are obligatory on people of faith and negate all kinds of sin, then they were elucidated by the Traditions through sayings of faith. When such offenses were mixed with faith, modified, and described as pure and without offenses, it was said they were not of the conditions laid by Allah on the faithful, nor are they the signs through which the people of faith are to be recognized. Therefore, it negated its essence<sup>1</sup> while the name remained. If somebody asks how it could be owing to the Arab rhetoric (the hyperbolic way of the Arabs) that does not relinquish the function from the one who performs it, do you not notice that the worker who does not do his job efficiently will be considered as not doing anything nor performing the job?

The meaning here refers to lack of perfection, not to the job itself. To them, he is a worker in name and not an efficient worker, so they could even say more than that. It is like a man who disobeys his father and causes him much harm. In such a case they say he is not his son, though they know he is his own flesh and blood. The same is said about the brother and the wife. Therefore, Abu 'Ubeid said:

So are the sayings which refer to renouncing somebody, as when the Prophet (peace be unto him) says: Who does such and such a thing does not belong to us. There is nothing which refers to renouncing the Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him) or his religion. But to us it means that he is not one of the obedient, nor the followers

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<sup>1</sup> He means sincerity and purity, i.e. his essence which is not mixed with any form of offence.

who take the Prophet as a model, nor of the establishments who preserve our laws.

As to recounted consequences of heresy and polytheism and their being associated with sin, to us sin does not imply heresy or polytheism which annul faith in one who commits it. It means that it belongs to the manners and customs of heretics and polytheists.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, there are many illustrations and lawful parallels all of which explain such information, as:

- The elaborated Traditions which indicate that those who commit great offenses and sin do not stay eternally in Hell, but they go to Paradise either after temporary punishment in Hell or after being pardoned and forgiven by Allah, the One Who forgives, the Merciful. We have already referred to some of these Traditions. However, a number of them refer to major sins which are in their essence harder than other deeds described as heretic in some sayings. Adultery and stealing are worse than insulting a Muslim, believing in evil omens, or wailing the dead, which is described as heretic.
- Regarding the matters described as heretic in some of the Prophetic Traditions, if there was the reason of apostasy and leaving the religion of Almighty Allah, its verdict on earth would have been the same verdict agreed upon by Muslims, which is stated by the Messenger of God (peace be unto him) when he says in the approved saying: The one who embraces another faith, kill him.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, we find Almighty Allah ordering the cutting off of the thief's hand while the punishment of the fornicator and the slanderer is by whipping. If the sin committed

<sup>1</sup> Abu 'Ubeid al-Qasem ibn Salam, *A Message of Faith*, pp.89.

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Abbas in *Al-Jihad*.



was to turn the sinner into a heretic, the verdict would have not merely been the cutting off and whipping. And the pardon of the killer by the one in charge of the murdered person would not be accepted because the apostate cannot be pardoned by anyone in the world. The texts of the Qur'an, the Traditions, and the consensus all indicate that the fornicator, the thief, and the slanderer are not to be killed, but are to be legally punished which indicates they are not apostates.<sup>1</sup>

- We find texts in the Qur'an in which God Almighty makes the one who committed a major sin a believer if he affirms the attribute of faith and its accompaniments on him.<sup>2</sup> <<*O you who believe! The law of equality in punishment is prescribed for you in case of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But if the relatives (or one of them) of the killed (person) forgive their brother (the killer) something, then the relatives (of the killed person) should demand blood-money in a reasonable manner, and the killer must pay with handsome gratitude. This is an alleviation and a mercy from your Lord. So after this whoever transgresses the limits, he will have a painful torment.*>> (2:178) Allah Almighty did not exclude the killer from the believers, and He made him a brother to the one in charge of carrying out the law of equality. What is meant here is to make of him a brother in religion.<sup>3</sup> <<*And if two parties or groups among the believers fall into fighting, then make your peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that rebels till it*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Salam, *A message of Faith*, p 89; and *At-Tahawiyah Creed*, p 361.

<sup>2</sup> *At-Tahawiyah Creed*, p 361; *The Mediatory Creed* (with interpretation by Muhammad Khalil Haras) p 138-139.

<sup>3</sup> *The Interpretation of At-Tahawiyah Creed*, p 361.

*complies with the command of Allah; then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily! Allah loves those who are equitable. The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy.>> (49:9-10)*

The people of the *Sunnah* prove that sedition has its own stated punishment. The people of the *Sunnah* decided that sedition was one of the sins that does not cause its committers to be apostates, if it is not associated with one of the causes of heresy, or the committers do not say there is no harm in committing sin while believing in Allah. That is what a group called 'The Postponing' (*al-Murje'a*) has said. They claim that a sin never harms the one who commits it as long as he is a believer. That is contrary to Allah's Book and the Prophet's (peace be unto him) *Sunnah*, as the Lawgiver has implied the punishment after death for many prohibitions and offenses.

As to the people of *Sunnah*, they believe that committing sin results in suffering and punishment that Allah promised in His Book, and which is mentioned by His Messenger (peace be unto him). They also believe that such sins have their influence on one's faith. It increases or decreases its existence or non-existence. The frequency of committing sins, on the other hand, may lead one to fall into heresy by denying what the Messenger (peace be unto him) conveyed in order to justify the requirements of desire and lust. This is also because pursuing one's lusts and committing offenses and sin in a great amount could deaden one's heart and could justify everything he does until he considers sin his lawful right, which turns him into heresy, Allah forbid.

The misjudgement of *Al-Murje'a* group is based on its taking the outward form and meaning of the above texts which show that he who dies believing in the Oneness of Allah is admitted in Paradise, as the Messenger (peace be unto him) said:

He who dies knowing there is no God but Allah, enters Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

They thought his admittance in Paradise requires his non-punishment, but it is not binding; a disobedient believer could still be punished according to Allah's will and then admitted in Paradise at the end.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps they simply adhered to the Almighty's words: **<<On those who believe and do righteous deeds, there is no sin on them for what they ate (in the past), if they fear Allah (by keeping away from His forbidden things), and believe and do righteous deeds, and again fear Allah and once again do good deeds with perfection. And Allah loves the good-doers.>> (5:93)**

In truth this verse of the Qur'an was revealed about the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be please with them) who died before forbidding alcohol, since they were not asked about drinking it before forbidding it. This is revealed in what came as a reason for the verse's revelation. It was reported that Qudama ibn Abdullah and a group of men drank wine after the Qur'an forbade it, and interpreted the Almighty's words: **<<And obey Allah and the Messenger, and beware (of even coming near to drinking or gambling, etc.) and fear Allah. Then if you turn away, you should know that it is Our Messenger's duty to convey (the Message) in the clearest way.>> (5:92)** When this was mentioned to Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), he agreed with Ali ibn Abu Talib and the rest on the Companions, that if they

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.1, p 218.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p 219.

admitted the forbidding they would be whipped, and if they persisted on its being their lawful right, they would be killed. Umar then said to Qudama:

Since you have become pious and believe in Allah and to righteous things, why do you drink wine? That is because this verse was revealed when Allah Almighty forbade wine which was after the Battle of Uhud. So some of the Companions said: What about our mates who died when they were still drinking? Therefore, Allah revealed this verse and revealed that the person who ate or drank at a time when it was not forbidden, there is nothing against him if he was of the righteous, pious believers.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Great Sins**

The above is the verdict on all offenses small or great. Allah has warned us and His Prophet (peace be unto him) against succumbing to it. A believer should always be equipped with piety towards Allah, should multiply his supply of it, avoid what Allah has forbidden, stay within his own limits and never justify an act by claiming something as a minor sin. *<<It will not be in accordance with your desires (Muslims), nor those of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), whosoever works evil, will have the recompense thereof, and he will not find any protector or helper besides Allah.>> (4:123)*

The Messenger of Allah (peace be unto him) said:

When the guilty commits an offenses, a black spot is imprinted on his heart. If he repents and asks forgiveness, his heart is polished, if not the spot widens until it is above

<sup>1</sup> Qurturby's Interpretation, vol.6, p 364-365.

his heart.<sup>1</sup> That is, the black spot over spreads and covers the heart. The stain is mentioned by Almighty Allah in His Book: <<*Nay! But on their hearts is the covering of sins and evil deeds which they used to earn.*>> (83:14)

Some of the learned ( *'Ulama*) have said:

Do not think of the smallness of the offense, but consider whom you have disobeyed.

Al-Hassan al-Bassary said:

Leaving the sin is easier than asking for forgiveness.

This is reiterated by Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) in his true Tradition:

What I have forbidden to you, avoid; what I have ordered you (to do), do as much (of it) as you can.<sup>2</sup>

Look at how the Prophet (peace be unto him) was able to insert one's ability in the orders and did not insert it in the forbidden things owing to its dangerous effect and disagreeable impact, and because one should exert effort to do his best to be away from it.

Al-Fodail ibn 'Iyad has said:

As much as the offense is small to you as much as it is great to Allah; and as much as it is great to you it is small to Allah. Al-Salaf said: Sin is the way to heresy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Recounted by Ibn Jarir, Tirmidhi, al-Nisa'e, and Ibn Majah. *Sahih al-Tirmidhi* (with Ibn al-Arabi's interpretation), vol.12, p 234. Also *Sunnah Ibn Majah*, vol.2, p 1418.

<sup>2</sup> *Fath al-Bari*, vol.17, p 21; and *Sahih Muslim* (with Nawawy's interpretation), vol.5, p 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Zawajer*, vol.1, p 12.

The frequency of sin hardens the heart and drives away everything good in it, which induces the person to commit whatever he wants and do whatever he likes. Thus he leaves Allah and takes Satan to be his master who leads him astray, tempts, and repulses him, satisfied by nothing than heresy from him if that is possible.

In spite of that, it is doubtless that Almighty Allah has greatly forbidden some offenses, and warned and threatened the one who does it with a severe punishment. The Messenger (peace be unto him) as well considered some offenses as deadly sins. He mentioned some of them in a number of his true sayings and called them 'great sins'.

On the authority of Abd al-Rahman ibn Abu Bakarah on the authority of his father, who said:

We were at the place of God's Messenger (peace be unto him) and he said: May I tell you what the major sins are? (He repeated this three times): associating others with Allah; disobedience to parents; telling lies, and giving false testimony. He said this so many times that we wished he would stop<sup>1</sup>

On the authority of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) said:

Avoid seven ruining things. They asked: O Messenger of Allah, what are these? He (peace be unto him) said: Associating others with Allah; turning to magic; killing, which is forbidden except in cases of righteousness;

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2 p 82; Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Anas, *Diyaat (Blood Money)*.

devouring an orphan's fortune; taking usury; fleeing from holy war; and slandering good chaste women.<sup>1</sup>

On the authority of 'Abdullah 'Amr ibn al-'As, (may God be pleased with him) who said that God's Messenger (peace be unto him) said:

One of the major sins is man's insult to his parents. They said: O messenger of God, does a man insult his parents? He said: Yes when he insults a man's father and the man insults his father; and when he insults a man's mother and the man insults his mother.<sup>2</sup>

There are many other sayings mentioning some of the offenses that are described as great sins. In fact, it is not confined to a fixed number in the Traditions.<sup>3</sup> The reason for this might be for urging the believers to avoid all kinds of offenses, fearing that some of the committed sins are major ones. Nevertheless, the majority of predecessors and successors see that offenses are divided into small and great ones. There is no doubt that in each offense there is disobedience to Almighty Allah in His commands and His prohibitions, and to disobey and offend Allah Almighty is unsuited to His Grace. Still some offenses are lesser than others.

<sup>1</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2 p 82-83; Al-Bukhari, the Book of *Wasaya (Wills)*

<sup>2</sup> Agreed upon. The phrase is Muslim's. An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, pp.82, 83.

<sup>3</sup> An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2. p84.

## The Definition of a Major Sin and Its Dimensions

The Companions learned expressions for defining the great sins and their distinction from the small one differed<sup>1</sup> greatly from each other, yet a number of them incline towards saying that the great sin is every offense resulting in legal punishment, threatened by Hell, or the great wrath of Allah. This is recounted on the authority of Ibn Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with them), and Al-Hassan al-Bassary, (may Allah have mercy on him).<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hammed Al-Ghazali, (may Allah have mercy on him) said that:

With every offense a person proceeds without feeling trepidation, warning, or repentance, like the reckless person or the one who is so used to it. If one feels such reckless and heedless behaviour, then the offense is great, such as to offense caused by the slip of the tongue, although not intentional, or when one has not reached the stage of piety and when his offense is mixed with a sense of guilt which spoils the pleasure of his offense. It is not a great offense then, though it does not exclude justice.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, it is preferable to prove to the dear reader through good and sensible words, the distinction between the great and the minor sins, by the Imam Al-Sheikh al-'Ezz ibn Abd al-Salam in his book *The Rules (Al-Qawa'ed)* where he says:

If you want to know the difference between the great and the small sins, you have to compare the corruption

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Zawajer*, vol. 1, p 4; and An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, p 85ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Interpretation of Tahawiyah Creed*, p 418; An-Nawawy, *Interpretation of Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2. p 85.

<sup>3</sup> Transmitted by Nawawy from Al-Ghazali, in his interpretation on *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p 85.



caused by the offense with the corruption of great sins as stated in the texts. If the corruption caused by the offense is less than the lowest corruption caused by the great sins, then the offense is minor. If it is equal to the lowest or graver, then it is one of the great sins. If one insulted Allah or His Messenger (peace be unto him), or talked lightly of Messengers, or did not believe in one of them, or if he threw Allah's Book in the dirt, it would be a great sin, though Islamic law declares these to be great offenses. It is the same thing when a person panders a woman for a man to commit adultery or a Muslim to be killed. Doubtless, the evil effect of that is greater than devouring the orphan's fortune, although it is one of the great sins. It is also the same if one revealed the weak points of the Muslims to heretics knowing that they would uproot the Muslims because of him, or if one insulted their women and children, spoiled their money, committed adultery with their women, and ruined their homes.

Causing such corruption is greater than fleeing from holy war without excuse, though it is one of the great sins. The Law-Giver has stated that perjury and plundering the orphan's money are great sins. If they occur when the amount of money is abundant it will be apparent, and if they happen when the amount is small, it could be a great sin due to such corruption. The Law-Giver has also made the drinking of a drop of alcohol as one of the great sins, though the evil effect is not realized by that. To know exactly the similarity and the differences between corruption is a grace not bestowed on anyone except those who are guided by Almighty God. Knowing the similarities between corrupting things is more important than knowing the

differences. and the good effects, and the corrupting ones cannot be contained except by approximation.<sup>1</sup>

Some scholars have encompassed the great sins by saying that every offense linked with a threat, a legal punishment, or damnation is considered a great one. Therefore, killing a believer is a great sin because it is linked with a threat and damnation. Fighting (a Muslim), adultery, stealing and slander are great sins because they are linked with Islamic legal punishment. Therefore, any offense whose corrupting effect is similar to what is linked with threat, damnation, or legal punishment or more than that is then considered a great sin.<sup>2</sup>

### **Some of the Great Sins**

From this you learn, dear reader, that what is mentioned by the *'ulama* (scholars) concerning rules which distinguish between the minor and great sins depends greatly on approximation. You also learn that the texts defined certain great sins, while others defined some of the minor ones. Still there are offenses comprising minor and great ones. Your duty is to do your best to avoid every offense and protect yourself from what the Law-Giver has stated as great ones. You have to exert more effort. You should also do the same regarding what the learned have considered as great, but do not ever think of a minor one as trivial, and do not neglect it or insist on it however small it is. The learned affirmed that persisting in small offenses shows the person's careless attitude towards his religion.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Rules of Legal Punishment, vol. 1, pp.23, 24.

<sup>2</sup> *The Rules of Legal Punishment*, vol.1, pp.23-24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p 27.

The frequency of committing minor offenses even when they are different is likewise no less than a great offense because such frequency shows carelessness towards religion, and also shows the disregard the person feels about offending Almighty Allah.

In this context, I recall a few words about the great sins as mentioned in Ibn Hajar Al-Haythamy in his valuable book, *Az-Zawajer 'An Iqteraf Al-Kaba'er* (The Curbing Ways of Committing Major Sins). He says in his book:

The great sin is polytheism, may Allah protect us from it, and a lesser one is flattery, anger for a false cause, envy, covetousness, pride, vanity, conceit, deception, hypocrisy, prostitution, rejecting the people out of scorn for them, greed, dissatisfaction at fate, looking at the rich and glorifying their wealth, looking down upon poor people for their poverty, rivalry and showing off in life, adorning oneself with what is forbidden, adulation, love of false pride, enthusiasm for other than Allah's religion, and the negligence of Allah's rights and commands to man. Others are pursuing one's pleasure and rejecting what is true, suspicion of a Muslim, not accepting truth if it comes with what one does not desire, or on the hands of someone hated, the joy of Allah's servant with his offense and his persistence in it, forgetting about Allah and the next life, the feeling of safety of Allah's cunning, resuming the offenses, and mistrusting the Almighty Allah or His Messenger (peace be unto him). Furthermore, imprinting the bad habit in people; not learning the Prophetic *Sunnah*; not fulfilling the promise; the love of what is dark and immoral; hatred of good people and harming them; the evil word that causes corruption and its harming effect spreads which causes Allah's anger; leaving prayer or Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) when hearing his name mentioned because of

being engaged in forbidden pleasure, satisfaction in the great sins and helping committing them, adhering to evil and lewdness until he is feared by people; forgetting the Qur'an; arguing, boycotting, disputing, and asking for conquest in the Qur'an or faith; not purifying the body or clothes of wine; unnecessarily exposing hidden parts and having intercourse with one's wife in menstruation; intentionally leaving prayer and intentionally delaying in prayer; advancing prayer without excuse as travelling or sickness; leading congregation in prayer for people who hate his being their Imam; breaking the line in prayer and not trying to make it straight and not following the Imam by going faster; and making mosques a burial ground and using lamps, and staying there. Of the great sins also are the woman travelling alone; then leaving or returning from travel in a bad mood; leaving the Friday prayer with the congregation without excuse; crossing the lines while Muslims are praying on Friday; the man's wearing of pure silk without a lawful excuse or adorning himself with gold and silver ornaments other than a ring; men imitating women in matters conventionally known such as in clothing, way of talking, movements and so on; and likewise, its opposite, i.e. women imitating men; pride and sashaying while walking; striking the face; tearing up clothes; and wailing in lamentation when a disaster happens. Other sins are not giving due alms and also delaying in giving it without lawful excuse; the stinginess of the creditor on his penniless debtor while he knows he has no money; giving charity as a favour; depriving the needy the use of water; not fasting one of the days of Ramadan without an excuse of travel or sickness; delaying in fasting the days left of Ramadan; fasting on the two *Eids* and the three days following the Day of Immolation; not performing pilgrimage

till death, though able to perform it; drinking or eating what is intoxicating whether it be alcohol, hashish or opium; eating the pig's meat or the flesh of something dead; taking usury, seeking it, and promoting it; devouring money through corrupt sales as well as other forbidden ways of earning money; monopoly and cheating in selling and selling the commodity with false swearing, cheating in weighing and such things. Other sins are the delay in paying one's debts in spite of wealth and without any excuse, looting the orphan's money; spending money on forbidden things; building more than necessary to show off; betraying the partner and the agent; usurpation which is illegal seizure of another person's money in an unfair way; seizing permissible money and preventing it from the wayfarer; the denial of money kept as a deposit on a mortgaged or rented place; etc.

Ibn Hajar has mentioned more than these matters and it is preferable to refer to his book.<sup>1</sup>

### **Reasons to Annul the Punishment of the Disobedient**

If the believer falls into disobedience, Allah Almighty has opened the doors of mercy for his worshippers to be rid of the punishment for what they committed, if they have been sincere and righteous. Some scholars have deduced there are conditions that annul the punishment for offenses from the Qur'anic texts and Prophetic Traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> *Az-Zawajir*, vol.1-2. Of others who listed the great offences and mentioned their divisions and significance are Iman Al-Thakaby in *Al-Kabeer*, and Sheikh Muh ibn Abd Al-Wahab in *Al-Kabeer*.

The conclusion reached on the subject by the interpreter of Tahawy Creed says that:

The punishment of Hell can be averted for about ten reasons, known by deduction from the Qur'an and the Prophetic Traditions. The first reason is repentance. The Almighty said: **<<Then, there has succeeded them a posterity who have given up prayers and have followed lusts. So they will be thrown into Hell. Except those who repent and believe, and work righteousness. Such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in aught.>>** (:56-60) **<<Except those who repent and do righteous deeds, and openly declare (the truth which they concealed). These, I shall accept their repentance. And I am the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.>>** (2:160)<sup>1</sup>

Repentance which annuls the punishment is pure repentance, coming from the heart, not the one merely uttered by the tongue. It is usually accompanied by regretting the committed offenses, the will not to go back to them, and the performance of good deeds.

Repentance is a condition for forgiving offenses and not incurring punishment for them is agreed upon by all, and there is nothing as equal in effect as repentance. **<<Say: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.>>** (39:53)

A second condition is asking forgiveness of God. **<<And Allah would not punish them while you (Muhammad) are amongst them, nor will he punish them while they seek (Allah's)**

<sup>1</sup> Tahawiyah Creed, pp.371 to 397, 511 to 517.

***Forgiveness>>*** (8:33) In fact, asking for forgiveness is part of repentance because it is a request for forgiving the offenses committed by the worshipper, which is part of remorse for what man did. Asking for forgiveness in this sense signifies, as well, the determination to avoid the offense in the future.

The third condition is doing good deeds. ***<<And offer prayers perfectly, at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful.>>*** (11:114)

The fourth condition is encountering worldly disasters. The Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

For any trouble, illness, worry, grief, hurt or sorrow which afflicts a Muslim, even the pricking of a thorn, Allah removes in its place some of his sins.”<sup>1</sup>

Know then that expiation of sins could be due to the falling of the disaster itself, if he shows patience, he is recompensed with a new reward above expiating his sins, if he showed dissatisfaction, he adds a new sin. The expiation of his sins then remains tied to the falling of the disaster.

The fifth condition is the punishment in the grave. The sixth and seventh conditions are the horrors and the dread of the Day of Judgment.

The eighth condition is Allah’s pardon, the Most Merciful, without any intercession: ***<<Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases, and whoever sets up***

<sup>1</sup> Agreed upon. *Reyad as-Saliheen*, p 31.

*partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.>> (4:48) <<Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him, but He forgives whom He pleases sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away.>> (4:116)*

The ninth condition is due to the believers' prayers and requests of forgiveness during their lifetimes and after death. The tenth condition is what is given to the believing worshipper of recompense for charity, recitation of the Qur'an, *Hajj*, etc. The people of the *Sunnah* have agreed that the dead believers also benefit from the living in two ways. The first way is what the dead left in life, for it is confirmed that the Prophet (peace be unto him) said:

When the son of Adam dies his work is cut off except from three things: a current charity, a good son praying for him, or a learning of benefit to others after his death.<sup>1</sup>

The second way is through a Muslims' prayers, their asking for forgiveness, giving charity, and performing pilgrimage. However, scholars have differed about physical types of worship such as fasting, praying, reciting the Qur'an, and mentioning the names of God. Abu Hanifa, Ahmed, and the majority of the ancients believed that the above types of worship reach the dead, but what is maintained by Shafi'e and Malik is that they do not reach him.

The evidence that the dead benefit from things not caused by him is asserted by what the Almighty says: <<*And those who came after*

<sup>1</sup> Produced by Muslim in his *Sahih* on the authority of Abu Huraira, and Bukhari in Literature.



*them say: Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.>> (59:10)*

Almighty God commended them for asking forgiveness for their ancestors who believed in God, which signifies that the dead Muslims benefit from the prayer of the living.

What also testifies to the dead benefiting from prayer for them is the consensus of the nation to pray for them in the congregational prayer. The prayers that came in the Traditions for funeral prayer are many, as well as prayers for the dead after burying him. The Messenger of God (peace be unto him) taught his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) when they went to the graves to say:

Peace be upon you, people of the house of believers and Muslims. We will, Allah willing, follow you. We ask Allah to give you and us strength (safety).<sup>1</sup>

What also shows that the benefit of charity reaches the dead is what came in the two *Sahihs* on the authority of Aisha (may God be pleased with her), that a man came to the Prophet (peace be unto him) and said:

O Messenger of God, my mother has passed away and did not leave a will, and I believe if she talked she would have given a charity. Will she be rewarded if I give charity for her? He said: Yes.<sup>2</sup> (There are more than one saying in this context.)

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahih Muslim with Nawawy's interpretation*, vol.7, p 45.

<sup>2</sup> Agreed upon and the phrase belongs to Muslim. *Sahih Muslim with Nawawy's interpretation*, vol.7, p 89.

What shows that the reward for fasting reaches the dead is what came in the two *Sahihs* on the authority of Aisha (may God be pleased with her), that Allah's Messenger (peace be unto him) had said:

Whoever died without completing his fast, the person who is responsible for him should fast for him.<sup>1</sup>

What shows that the reward of pilgrimage reaches the dead is what came in *Sahih al-Bukhari* on the authority of Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), that a woman from Juhaina came to the Prophet (peace be unto him) and said:

My mother has vowed to perform pilgrimage but she could not fulfill her promise before she died. Should I perform it for her? He said: Perform it for her. Don't you think that if she had to pay a debt, you would have paid it for her? You have to pay Allah as Allah is more worthy of a fulfilled debt.<sup>2</sup>

That does not contradict what the Almighty says: **<<And that man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad).>>** (53:39) *<<Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us; our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Protector and give us victory over the disbelieving people.>>* (2:286) *<<This Day (Day of Resurrection), none will be wronged*

<sup>1</sup> Agreed upon. *Sahih Al-Bukhari 'Fasting'*.

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol.4, p 52.

*in anything, nor will you be requited anything except that which you used to do.>> (36:54)*

Because man by embracing Islam and his tie of faith to the Muslims, his good treatment of others, his good actions towards people and his love towards them, he has given them impetus to pray for him after his passing away, ask for his forgiveness, request mercy for him, and offer the reward of certain acts of worship for him in his stead. Such gain is the consequence of his work. When it is said that the dead benefit by what is offered for him by his Muslim brothers, this does not contradict these noble verses. They are accurate verses explaining Almighty Allah's justice and elucidating that none can prosper except through his deeds.

It is noteworthy to mention that there are some customs and superstitions which do not belong to what is already mentioned. These have no evidence in Islamic law and none of the scholars have agreed on them, for instance hiring people to recite the Qur'an offered to the dead. This was not authorized by anyone. Hiring people to teach Qur'an is a different matter. As to hiring individuals to recite the Qur'an and give its reward to the dead, or hiring someone who prays and fasts and offering it to the dead, there is no difference to its being unacknowledged. What is not irrefutable with reference to our subject is the recitation of the Qur'an and offering its reward to the dead free without taking or issuing wages.

Finally we thank Almighty Allah, the God of all the worlds.